DH
DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

New Zealand break their duck

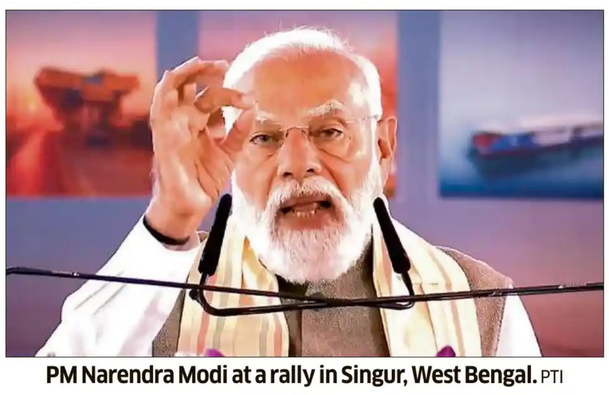
Kiwis register first ODI series win in India despite Kohli ton

Page 14

BJP will end TMC's 'maha jungle raj': PM

In Singur, Modi says investments will come when law & order improves

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
KOLKATA, DHNS



PM Narendra Modi at a rally in Singur, West Bengal. PTI

Investments will come in only if law and order improves, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday in Singur, the site where West Bengal's industrial ambition had collided with agrarian resistance two decades ago.

"Industries will be set up in (West) Bengal, and investments will also come, but only when law and order will improve here," Modi said at a poll rally, claiming that the TMC's 'maha jungle raj' had given a free rein to rioters, looters and mafias in the state.

"Here, the extortionists impose 'syndicate tax'," he alleged and said that only a BJP government could end the mafia rule in West Bengal and free the state from the clutches of the criminals. "This is a guarantee from Modi," he said.

The agitation by Trinamool Congress and other parties against the acquisition of land for the Nano car plant of Tata Motors in Singur between 2006 and 2008 had helped Mamata Banerjee mobilise rural anger and finally end the 34-year-long rule of the Left Front in 2011.

The TMC has been citing Singur as a symbol of its fight to protect the rights of its farmers against forcible industrialisation. The BJP, now the principal challenger to the TMC, however, blames Mamata's government for scaring away investors and thus deepening the problem of unemployment in West Bengal.

▸ Modi, Page 5

> A very large number of mothers, sisters, and farmers have gathered here. All of them have come with one shared hope – a hope for a real change. There is a collective resolve to end the 15-year-long maha jungle raj (of the TMC). The BJP has once again resisted the return of jungle raj in Bihar, and now it's the turn of West Bengal, which too, is prepared to say goodbye to the TMC's maha jungle raj
>
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

BJP people's 1st choice: PM

The verdict of elections in the past couple of years suggests that the BJP has become the first choice of the nation whereas people have lost faith in the Congress, PM Modi said on Sunday while addressing a public meeting in poll-bound Assam.
Details on Page 8

State's no-exercise rate up as desk jobs, sugar-heavy diet take a toll

ASHWIN BM
BENGALURU, DHNS

CONCERNING TREND
Physical inactivity among those aged 18–49 in Karnataka skyrocketed from **17% to 43.5%**

- Nationally, non-physical activity nearly tripled from **12% to 33.5%**
- Nearly **78%** of young adults reported insufficient intake of fruits and vegetables
- Reasons for this shift include relentless **work pressure**, a reliance on junk food, and lifestyle changes inherent in nuclear families

As Karnataka's middle class grows and nuclear families multiply, young adults have dramatically reduced their physical activity, with the "no-exercise" rate nearly tripling, as per an analysis of a WHO survey.

C M Lakshmana, a professor at Bengaluru-based Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), analysed the data in 2024-25 from the World Health Organisation-Global Ageing and Adult Health (SAGE) India survey Wave-1 (2007–08) and Wave-2 (2015–16), which was conducted by him.

The analysis applies contemporary public-health benchmarks to assess how past behavioural changes translate into today's risks for working-age population.

The survey paints a stark picture: physical inactivity among those aged 18–49 in Karnataka skyrocketed by over 2.5 times, from 17% to 43.5%. Nationally, non-physical activity nearly tripled.

The analysis probed why many working-age adults failed to meet the WHO's minimum standards of 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. By looking at factors like desk-heavy jobs and family life and diet, the analysis shows how modern work culture and lifestyle are making it harder for the core labour force to stay healthy.

▸ Exercise, Page 13

'Tech hiring set to rise this year with 1.25 lakh new roles'

AI roles shift from experimental to core needs

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

> We now have over 2,17,000 employees with higher order skills in AI, which is a three-fold increase over last year. AI is creating new roles, such as rapid-build engineers and leads, which are increasingly vital for the future. We are currently working on aligning our role framework with AI as the centrepiece
>
> **SUDEEP KUNNUMAL**
> TCS Chief HR Officer

Technology hiring in 2026 is expected to add around 1,25,000 new roles in the country, with 12-15% growth in overall tech jobs compared with previous year, said Adecco India.

The HR solutions provider said AI, data and cybersecurity roles have shifted from experimental and discretionary to core organisational needs, with demand growing 51%.

Sanketh Chengappa, Adecco India Director, said hiring in the IT and IT Services sector showed early signs of stabilisation through 2025. After a cautious period in 2023-24, demand began to rebuild in areas tied to AI engineering, cloud transformation, cybersecurity, data platforms and platform modernisation.

"Campus intake also improved as firms restarted structured early-career programmes. This uptick indicates a sector shifting from restraint to renewal, setting the stage for a more decisive recovery in 2026 as the talent gap widens," he said.

Top Indian IT services firms during their Q3 earnings conferences said they would continue hiring freshers and people with specialised skills.

▸ Tech hiring, Page 13

8 soldiers injured in J&K encounter

SRINAGAR, DHNS: Eight Army soldiers were injured after an encounter broke out between security forces and terrorists in a forest area in Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir, on Sunday.

According to officials, two or three terrorists, believed to be affiliated with Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), are holed up in the area.
Details on Page 8

Trump invites India to be part of Gaza peace board

NEW DELHI, PTI: India has been invited by US President Donald Trump to be part of the Board of Peace for Gaza along with other global partners, official sources said on Sunday.

Trump's Board of Peace is being projected by Washington as a new international body to usher in peace and stability in Gaza and beyond.
Details on Page 13

COASTAL INFRA

K'taka for Goa-style beach tourism push

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

With an eye on transforming Karnataka's 320-kilometre coastline into a vibrant hub for tourists, the Tourism Department has rolled out its first major initiative to enhance the state's coastal tourism footprint, identifying 40 locations for infrastructure development.

The department proposes to develop sea-facing resorts and stays, restaurants, amusement parks, and ocean and backwater cruises under public-private partnership (PPP) models, aiming to transform coastal Karnataka on the lines of Goa.

"We have mapped out the locations and will soon create the necessary infrastructure," Minister for Law, Tourism and Parliamentary Affairs HK Patil told *DH*.

▸ Tourism, Page 5

Expanding footprint
- 40 spots identified for 320-km coastal tourism expansion
- Govt will provide land, pvt players will build infra
- Beach festivals, theme- based development

At least 5k dead in Iran unrest

REUTERS: At least 5,000 people have been killed in protests in Iran, including about 500 security personnel, an Iranian official said on Sunday, citing verified figures and accusing "terrorists and armed rioters" of killing "innocent Iranians".

The Iranian official further said the verified death toll was unlikely to "increase sharply".
Details on Page 12

KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY (KIIT)
Deemed to be University
(Established U/S 3 of UGC Act 1956), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

A++ Grade Accrediated by NAAC
THE World University Rankings 2026: 501+ Cohort Globally, 5th India Rank
QS World University Rankings 2026: 1st in Odisha, 9th in India among pvt. universities
nirf 2025: 17th Among Indian Universities
NBA: Tier 1 Re-accredited by NBA
ABET: ABET (US) Accreditation
IET Accredited Programme: The Institute of Engineering and Technology
ECOSOC: Special Consultative Status by the UN-ECOSOC
Partnership with UN VOLUNTEERS

KIITEE 2026
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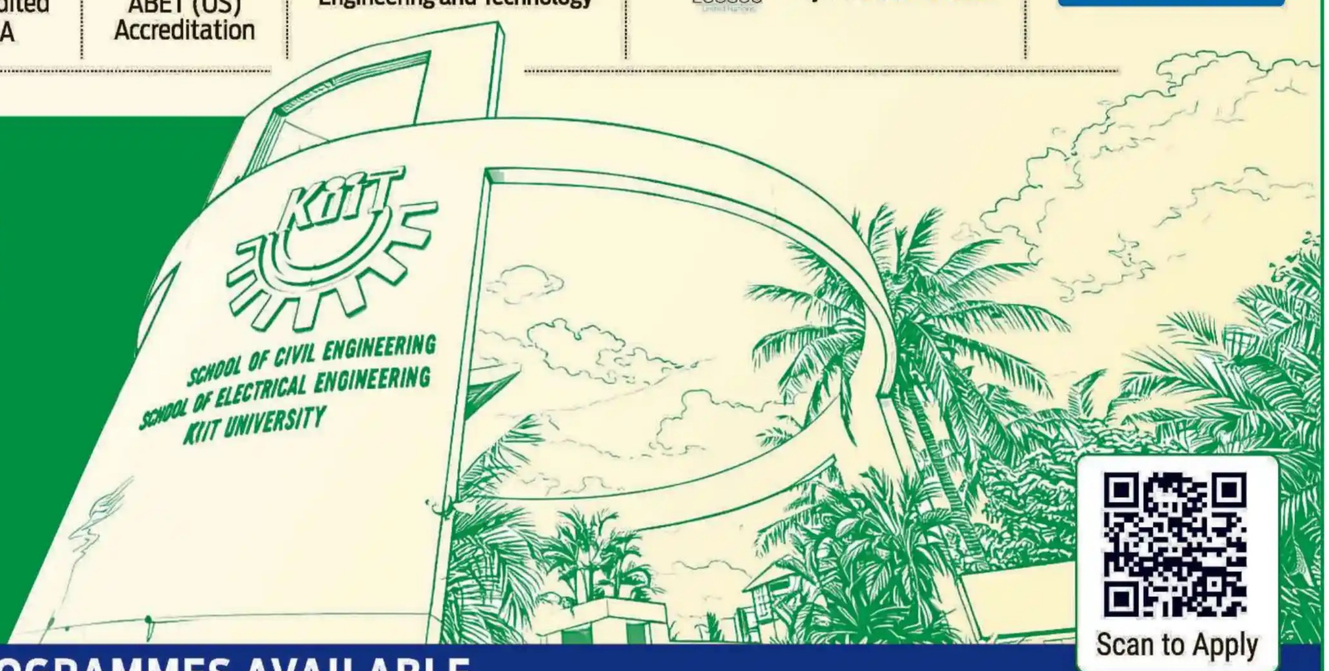
www.kiitee.ac.in / www.kiit.ac.in
No Examination Fee (Computer-Based Test)



Scan to Apply

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE

UG (3 years/4 years)/Integrated (5 years) Programmes
[All 4 years Programmes are with Honors/Research]

B.Tech Programmes
- Civil
- Construction Technology
- Electrical
- Electrical & Computer Science
- Mechanical
- Mechanical (Automobile)
- Aerospace
- Mechatronics
- Electronics & Telecommunication
- Electronics & Computer Science
- Electronics & Electrical
- Electronics (VLSI Design & Technology)
- Chemical
- Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)
- CSE (Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning)
- CSE (Artificial Intelligence)
- CSE (Cyber Security)
- CSE (Data Science)
- CSE (Internet of Things & Cyber Security including Block Chain Technology)
- CSE (Internet of Things)
- Information Technology
- Computer Science & System
- Computer Science & Communication
- Biotechnology

UG Programmes in other Disciplines
- B.Design (Automobile/ Graphic/Product)
- B.Design (Fashion / Textile)
- Integrated M.Tech Biotechnology (5yrs)
- B.Tech (Lateral Entry)
- B.Arch
- BCA
- BBA
- B.Sc (Hospitality & Tourism)
- Bachelor of Film & Television Production
- Bachelor of Communication & Journalism
- Bachelor of Physical Education & Sports
- BA Economics
- BA Sociology
- BA English
- BA Psychology
- BA French
- BA Spanish
- BA Japanese
- BA German
- B.Com
- B.Sc (Economics & Data Analytics)
- B.Sc Computer Science
- B.Sc Nursing
- B.Pharma
- D.Pharma
- B.Sc.(Fintech & Business Analytics)
- B.Sc.(Statistics & Data Analytics)

PG (1 year/2 years)/Integrated (5 years) Programmes
- M.Tech
- LLM (1yr)
- MCA
- M.Sc Biotechnology
- M.Sc Applied Microbiology
- M.Arch
- MBA-IEV (Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Venture Development)
- Master of Communication & Journalism
- Master in Urban & Regional Planning
- Master in Yoga & Naturopathy
- Master of Hospital Administration
- Master of Public Health
- MA in Fashion Management
- M. Design (Interior)
- M.Sc Computer Science
- MA Economics
- MA Sociology
- MA English
- MA Psychology
- Master in Public Policy
- M.Com
- M.Sc Physics
- M.Sc Chemistry
- M.Sc Mathematics & Data Science
- Master in Library & Information Sciences
- Master in Physical Education & Sports
- M.Sc Nursing
- Integrated M.Tech & Ph.D
- Ph.D

2025 Placement Highlights
750+ Companies
6000+ Job Offers
₹53 LPA Highest Salary Offered
₹8.50 LPA Average CTC
1500+ Paid Internships

Director Admissions, Admission Cell (Koel Campus), KIIT DU, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India-751024
admission@kiit.ac.in kiitee.ac.in 8080 735 735

KIIT (Deemed to be University) has only one permanent campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It has no other campus / off campus anywhere else in the country and globe.

Scooterist held for threatening couple with dagger

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a suspected case of road rage, a 25-year-old scooter rider allegedly pulled out a dagger and threatened a couple travelling in a car, police said on Sunday.

The Kadugodi police arrested the suspect, identified as Syed Arbaz, a resident of RT Nagar who works at a fish store, after a video of the incident went viral on social media.

Syed Arbaz

The incident occurred around 6 pm on January 16 near the Nexus Shantiniketan mall on Whitefield Main Road.

The dashcam footage showed the suspect getting off his two-wheeler following an argument over a traffic issue and brandishing the weapon in a threatening manner, police said.

Police said the accused has a criminal history with four prior cases, including those related to preparation for dacoity and causing hurt, registered at the Govindapura, Pulakeshinagar, Sampangirama Nagar and Ashok Nagar police stations.

Rs 450-crore ORR upgrade cleared with 10-year upkeep

Secondary medians to make way for extra traffic lane

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 10-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has cleared a Rs 450-crore revamp of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) between Silk Board Junction and KR Puram.

The project, which includes redevelopment of both the main carriageway and service roads, will cost Rs 26.47 crore per kilometre, making it among the most expensive road redevelopment works undertaken in the city.

The 17.01-km corridor has been split into two packages: Silk Board to Iblur Junction (5.44 km) at a cost of Rs 143 crore, and Iblur Junction to KR Puram (11.57 km) costing Rs 307 crore.

Passing through six major junctions — including HSR Layout, Agara, Iblur and Marathahalli — the stretch forms the backbone of Bengaluru's technology corridor. The area employs an estimated 6.42 lakh people, about half of whom commute using 3.38 lakh personal vehicles.

According to the Detailed Project Report (DPR), around 35% of the main carriageway and 20% of the service roads are in a distressed condition.

The TAC has recommended Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) instead of routine asphalting for sections prone to repeated damage. FDR involves pulverising existing pavement layers and stabilising them with binders to create a new base — a technique rarely attempted at this scale in Bengaluru.

A file photo of a traffic jam on the Outer Ring Road at Silk Board Junction. DH FILE PHOTO

The committee, headed by RK Jaigopal, has directed authorities to examine the feasibility of incorporating a long-term maintenance clause, requiring the asphalt pavement surface to be maintained to prescribed standards for 10 years after completion of the works.

To increase road capacity, secondary medians and existing bus stops will be removed to create at least one additional traffic lane. Bus stops currently located on medians will be shifted to the footpath side. The committee also instructed that uniform, wider footpaths and continuous cycle tracks be included, while noting issues related to incomplete land acquisition and misaligned property boundaries.

The 17.01-km corridor has been split into two packages: Silk Board to Iblur Junction (5.44 km) at a cost of Rs 143 crore, and Iblur Junction to KR Puram (11.57 km) costing Rs 307 crore.

Officials from the East and South City corporations and the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) have been asked to conduct joint inspections, verify Joint Measurement Certificates, and prepare updated lists of properties already acquired and those still pending acquisition.

Other directions issued by the committee include the use of Stone Matrix Asphalt (SMA) for resurfacing flyovers, provision of modern street lighting beneath Metro columns, examination of the feasibility of constructing a bridge at the Doddanekundi railway crossing, and relocation of the Muneshwara Temple to facilitate service road widening.

The TAC directed that all eight flyovers and three underpasses along the corridor undergo structural assessments, an exercise that was last carried out about three years ago.

Two undertrials booked for assaulting jail staffer

BENGALURU, DHNS

Two undertrial prisoners at Parappana Agrahara jail in Bengaluru allegedly assaulted an assistant jailer.

Anand, 33, (UTP 1489) and Abdul Ghani, 41, (UTP 18589) allegedly attacked Murthi S while he was on duty at the Tower 2 gate between 3 and 3.30 pm on January 7.

The two created a ruckus after Murthi refused them entry and told them to get permission from the jailer. They also "abused him in foul language".

"In the presence of other inmates and staff, Anand suddenly kicked me and assaulted me while I was seated in the chair. Incidents of this nature are occurring daily, creating an atmosphere of fear to perform duties, and there is a lack of proper protection. It is requested in the cited letter to take appropriate legal action against the said convicts before the situation goes out of hand and to take measures for the protection of the staff," stated the FIR registered by the police.

"Therefore, as the aforementioned convicts assaulted the on-duty staff, obstructed duty, and violated prison rules, a case has been registered against them, and the complaint has been filed requesting appropriate legal action. The delay in filing the complaint is due to bringing the matter to the notice of higher officials, gathering information about the incident, and verifying it," it added.

The FIR was filed on January 16 based on a complaint by Karna B Kshatri, Superintendent of Prisons (in charge), Parappana Agrahara Central Prison.

Prison sources said there is serious concern for staff safety in Karnataka prisons, especially the Bengaluru prison.

GBA polls: Draft electoral rolls out today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The State Election Commission (SEC) will publish the draft electoral rolls on Monday for the city's five new municipal corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA).

This means the GBA has completed 11 of the 19 tasks assigned by the commission ahead of the civic body polls, which are likely to be held by June.

Once the electoral roll is complete, the GBA will conduct house-to-house verification, disposal of claims and objections, and interact with representatives of political parties, among other tasks.

The final publication of the ward-wise electoral roll is scheduled for March 16.

Universal newborn screening programme to roll out in city

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Health Department will launch a Universal Newborn Screening Programme to detect congenital conditions and prevent rare disease deaths.

The pilot will begin in Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts.

Doctors from government maternity hospitals are being trained at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH). Blood samples from newborns will be collected between 48 and 72 hours after birth for testing.

The programme aims for early detection and timely treatment. Preparations are underway to implement it in government maternity hospitals in both districts.

IGICH and Vani Vilas Hospital will serve as testing centres. All newborns in public health facilities will be screened. If any abnormality is found, blood samples will be sent for further tests.

Screening will detect hypothyroidism, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, galactosemia, phenylketonuria, G6PD deficiency, and other metabolic disorders. The test will cost Rs 500. Once diagnosed, treatment, including hormone therapy and interventions, will be provided.

"This programme will help identify infants at risk and provide timely treatment. Newborn mortality will reduce through early detection and care. Delay in diagnosis makes treatment costly and increases risk of disability or death," said Dr Sanjay KS, Director, IGICH.

Ozempic: The weight-loss shortcut trending online

Physicians warn about using diabetes drug for slimming

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Ozempic, an anti-diabetes medication launched recently in India, is gaining traction for its role in rapid weight loss.

A social media wave is prompting many Bengalureans to ask doctors to prescribe Ozempic, whose active ingredient is Semaglutide, specifically for rapid weight loss.

In India, Ozempic is considered off label for weight loss, meaning it has been approved only for Type 2 diabetes and not for weight loss by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

Wegovy, another drug containing Semaglutide, has been approved for weight loss. However, because Ozempic was prescribed off label for weight loss earlier, people prefer Ozempic over Wegovy, doctors say.

Dr Nishchitha K, a consultant endocrinologist, told *DH*: "Ozempic is prescribed for patients with Type 2 diabetes when lifestyle measures and first line medication have not helped in controlling the blood sugar. Ozempic also helps in weight loss as it reduces appetite. I consider it for weight loss only when there is a clear health risk because of the weight and standard weight loss methods have not helped."

Withdrawal risks

Stopping Ozempic injections suddenly also results in medical complications, says Dr Subramanian Kannan, Director of Endocrinology and Diabetology at a private hospital.

"Clinical evidence shows that if the drug is stopped without structural lifestyle changes, hunger and weight will return. The medication suppresses appetite and stopping it often brings back those psychological pressures and strong hunger signals."

Dr Samith A Shetty, a consultant diabetologist, said: "While genuine medical needs drive many prescriptions, increased social media exposure and celebrity narratives have led to a rise in the demand from patients. Some people proactively request Ozempic for rapid loss of weight. This makes responsible prescription crucial."

Speaking about the precautionary measures before prescribing Ozempic, Dr Nishchitha explained: "Before starting, we assess a patient's medical history, kidney and liver functions, any personal history of pancreatitis, gall bladder disease, or medullary thyroid cancer because GLP-1 analogues can be problematic in certain conditions. We review blood sugars, HbA1c, electrolytes and sometimes abdominal imaging if clinically indicated. After starting, blood glucose, weight, gastrointestinal symptoms and any unusual pain are monitored."

Married man cheats techie on marriage promise; booked

BENGALURU, DHNS: Police have booked a man, his father and a woman suspected to be his wife for allegedly cheating a software engineer of Rs 1.53 crore on the promise of marriage.

The accused have been identified as Vijay Raj Gowda, his father Boregowda, and Soumya, who police believe is Vijay's wife.

According to the complaint, Vijay met the 29-year-old victim, a Whitefield resident, in March 2024 through a matrimonial website. He allegedly posed as a wealthy businessman, claiming to run a firm named VRG Enterprises with assets worth Rs 715 crore. He also told the victim that an Enforcement Directorate (ED) case had been registered against him and that it had been "settled".

The victim alleged that Vijay introduced her to his family, including his father, and falsely portrayed his wife as his sister, thereby concealing his marital status.

In later meetings, Vijay claimed that his bank accounts had been frozen by the ED and persuaded the woman to take loans and borrow money from friends, citing financial difficulties.

Police said Vijay borrowed Rs 1.75 crore from the victim, but repaid only Rs 22 lakh. He allegedly issued threats when she demanded the remaining amount. The woman later discovered that Vijay was married and had a child when she visited his house.

A case was initially registered at the Whitefield police station and was later transferred to the Kengeri police station for further investigation.

R-Day: 15 major roads get clean-up

BENGALURU, DHNS: Ahead of Republic Day, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation on Sunday conducted a cleanliness drive on 15 major roads across six Assembly constituencies, Commissioner P Rajendra Cholan said.

The drive covered key stretches including Channasandra Main Road, Indiranagar 6th Main Road, 80 Feet Road, 12th Main Road, NR Road, MG Road, Mother Teresa Road, Church Road, MM Road, and the stretch between Shanthala Silk Signal and Cottonpet.

The corporation also cleaned areas around the Manekshaw Parade Ground in preparation for Republic Day celebrations.

During the cleanliness drive, officials removed unauthorised flexes and banners, dry branches, and illegal cable wires.

Using tech, cops reunite missing kids with families

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru police recently used technology to reunite several missing children with their families.

"In recent weeks, several cases involving missing or unattended children were resolved quickly. Real-time emergency response systems, GPS-based resource deployment, and strong coordination between the control room and field personnel played a crucial role," a police statement said on Sunday.

"The most notable rapid response occurred on January 14 near the Hosakerehalli flyover under the Girinagar police station limits.

"A citizen saw a toddler alone on a busy road and called Namma 112. The automated dispatch system deployed Hoysala-314, which reached the spot in four minutes. The child was secured, verification was conducted, and the parents were traced shortly after. The child was safely handed over to them," the statement added.

WRONG WAY, BIG RISK

Commuters travelling the wrong way on the busy Balagangadharanatha flyover along Mysuru Road, creating a hazardous situation for other motorists. Traffic experts warn such violations can lead to serious accidents. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Lecture: Lakshmeesha's 'Jaimini Bharata' by Dr Pavagada Prakash Rao; Organised by Dr Pavagada Prakash Rao Amrita Mahotsava Committee; Patti Sabhangana, Sri Rama Mandira, NR Colony; 5.45 pm.

Mahayogi Vemana Jayanti: CM Siddaramaiah, DyCM DK Shivakumar to attend; Organised by Department of Kannada and Culture; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 6 pm.

CULTURAL

Folk Drama Festival: Organised by Natya Saraswati Shantala Kannada Kala Sangha; New Manjula Public School Complex, Gruhalakshmi Layout, Nelagadaranahalli; 1 pm.

Bengaluru Habba: Music programme by 'Bands Galore', Freedom Park, 3.30 pm; Basavanagudi Heritage Walk, Bull Temple Road, 5 pm; 'Echoes of Royal Patronage-Music and Literature of the Vijayanagara Empire', Indian Heritage Academy, Koramangala, 6.30 pm; Dance performance; Yuvapatha, Jayanagar, 7 pm; Play 'Size Her! The Clown', 7.30 pm, Bangalore International Centre (BIC), Domlur; Music programme, Gurupriya and Bharadwaj, Sabha, 8 pm.

Invites to be published in thiscolumn should be sent to:
incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.
Please note that hard copieswill not be accepted

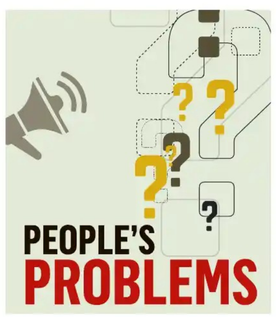
◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Mist

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	30.0°C
Minimum	15.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	37%
Sunset (Jan 19)	6:13 pm
Sunrise (Jan 20)	6:46 am
Moonrise	6:00 am
Moonset	6:00 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD



Need a hand? Write to us

Letters of grievances are pouring in and we are doing our best to accommodate as many as possible. Readers may write in to highlight civic problems affecting their locality and we will help address them in an interactive and effective manner.

Grievances and issues related to public utility agencies such as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) would be highlighted in the weekly column. The writeups, which could be accompanied by photographs highlighting the problems, will be published on Mondays. Mail your grievances to: peoplesproblems @ deccanherald.co.in

Deplorable road conditions highlight the need for immediate repairs.

Sarjapur-Varthur Road in deplorable condition

Sarjapur–Varthur Road is riddled with potholes and in a deplorable state, causing severe inconvenience and posing risks to commuters.

The authorities must urgently repair or relay the road to prevent accidents and ease daily travel for motorists and pedestrians.

Prameetha Kappiarath

Malleswaram footpath not for walkers

The footpath on 5th Cross, Malleswaram, is largely occupied by vehicles belonging to nearby commercial establishments and their customers, leaving very little space for pedestrians.

As a result, pedestrians are forced onto the adjacent road, which is a narrow service lane and extremely unsafe for walking. Despite repeated complaints to the authorities, the issue remains unaddressed.

Immediate action is needed to clear encroachments.

Sudhir S Mysore

Vehicles encroach upon the footpath at 5th Cross, Malleswaram, leaving little space for pedestrians.

The dangerously leaning tree needs immediate attention.

Leaning tree poses danger in residential area

A tree in our residential area has uprooted due to weak roots and is now leaning precariously. It could fall at any time onto electric lines, posing a serious risk to life and property.

Authorities are urged to take immediate action before a major mishap occurs.

R Gunaseelan
Heerachand Layout,
Cox Town

This public road in Udayanagar needs permanent clearance from encroachments.

Encroachments choke Udayanagar Main Road

Residents are forced to navigate Udayanagar Main Road (behind Tin Factory) daily, as both sides are heavily encroached upon by pushcart vendors, leaving little to no space for vehicles or pedestrians.

The situation worsens on Sundays when fish vendors create severe bottlenecks, so much so that even app-based taxis refuse to enter the road.

While the Special Task Force conducts occasional eviction drives, these are merely temporary measures, as vendors return within hours. The aggressive behavior of some vendors further discourages residents from raising concerns.

I urge the BBMP and traffic police to move beyond short-term inspections and implement a permanent solution to reclaim this public road for commuters and pedestrians.

KK Krishnan
Udayanagar Main Road

Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) : VB - G RAM G (विकसित भारत - जी राम जी) Act, 2025

125 DAYS
Guaranteed Wage Employment

Stronger provision for unemployment allowance | Timely wage payment and delay compensation | Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan (VGPP) by Gram Sabha

Viksit Gram Panchayats paving the way for Viksit Bharat

CBC 35101/13/0080/2526

Mobile app to track social responsibility activities of VTU students

Move aimed at prevention of fake certificates for points

BENGALURU, DHNS

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi, has developed a mobile application (app) to prevent engineering students from submitting fake certificates to get 'Activity Points'.

The app will track the activities of the students.

As per the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) norms, similar to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for companies, the students pursuing technical courses have Student Social Responsibility (SSR), an activity-based and mandatory requirement to earn Activity Points and receive their degree certificates.

"The submission of fake certificates is increasing as it is mandatory. To prevent it, we have developed a mobile application that has to be installed by every student, and their activities will be monitored," said an official of VTU. The Activity Point Tracking System (APTS) is an app that students must download to their phones. While engaging in activities, they take geo-tagged photos to confirm their attendance.

As explained by the officials, until now, the students used to submit certificates or photos to their mentors as proof of participation in activities. Some misused this by submitting certificates without actually participating in any activities. To prevent such irregularities, VTU has created this mobile app, and it will be released soon.

"AICTE introduced Activity Points with the good intention of instilling a spirit of service in engineering students during their course. To manage this, we have developed a mobile app," said H R Sudarshan Reddy, director, VTU Bengaluru Regional Office.

How does the app work?

The APTS app has been developed in collaboration with Youth for Seva and Life Cycle Sports Pvt Ltd. The students must enter complete details of the activities they participate in. The app will record how many hours the student spent on the activity.

According to AICTE Activity Point Coordinator Meera Rajagopal, this will prevent students from giving false information. After developing the app, the university has tested it in three colleges. "The students used it without any technical issues. Hence, it will soon be made available for all students," the official added.

The university has 212 engineering colleges under its jurisdiction, with 3 lakh students.

What are Activity Points?

AICTE introduced Activity Points to encourage students to engage in extracurricular activities alongside academics. AICTE has identified 16 different activities, and students must participate in at least five of them. The university has clearly stated that without earning the required points, the students will not be awarded their degree certificate in the final year. Participation in activities is mandatory every year. The points earned will be recorded in the marks card. These are non-credit points and will not affect the existing CGPA scores.

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- Skill rural population
- Preparing an actionable business proposal for enhancing village income
- Facilitating 100% digital transactions
- Developing and managing an efficient garbage disposal system
- Assist marketing of rural produce
- Food packaging and preservation

Power theft up as Bescom stops connections to homes sans OCs

Many draw illegal lines at construction stage too: Officials

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The number of cases filed against those drawing power illegally has been rising since September 2025 in Bescom limits, following the company's move to stop electricity connections to houses without valid occupancy certificates (OCs).

Although the OC mandate came into effect in April, many under-construction houses were occupied only later, leading to a gradual increase in cases, official sources said.

In December alone, Bescom's vigilance wing filed 419 cases, compared with 190 cases in the same month of 2024.

"House owners usually apply for power connections two to three months before the dwelling is ready for occupation. That explains why the cases of power theft increased September onwards," a senior Bescom official said.

Another official said a large number of cases were recorded in LT 7 category, under which temporary power connections are given. "Since we also stopped providing temporary connections for buildings without sanctioned plans, many started drawing illegal connections for construction purposes as well," the official explained.

The number of complaints to the Bescom helpline increased after July.

"Many cases were filed after we received complaints, mostly by neighbours. We also conduct inspections on alternate days and do random checks," the official said.

Electrical contractors say many new house owners tried to use temporary power connections for a while, but found them very expensive for daily use. As a result, many started drawing illegal power lines, a contractor said.

Electrical contractors working on the ground believe that many more cases may be going undetected.

"On the city's outskirts and in rural areas under Bescom, people are easily drawing power and even charging their UPS to be used later. They connect illegal lines for a while and then disconnect them. Many officials are involved and so, the cases go unnoticed," one of the contractors said.

Cases filed by Bescom vigilance wing

Month	2024-25	2025-26
April	350	**342**
May	391	**387**
June	410	**409**
July	450	**381**
August	438	**345**
September	414	**563**
October	361	**414**
November	425	**579**
December	190	**419**
January	416	
February	395	
March	337	

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K'taka ranked 2nd in Fasal Bima Yojana implementation

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka has been awarded the second rank in the category of "large states" in the overall performance of states in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) crop insurance scheme for Kharif 2024 and Rabi 2024-25 seasons.

On January 14, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare issued a certificate of commendation to the state government and appreciated its efforts in implementing the scheme. Of the 27.04 lakh registered farmers, 11.85 lakh farmers have claimed Rs 2,094 crore.

Agriculture Department officials received the award at the 13th National Review Conference of the PMFBY that began here on Sunday.

Agriculture Department Commissioner Y S Patil and Agriculture Department Director G T Puthra received the award.

Kadra SI suspended for 'inaction' in woman suicide case

KARWAR, DHNS: Superintendent of Police Deepan N M has issued order suspending Kadra sub-inspector Sunil Bandivaddar on charges of dereliction of duty and negligence in connection with the alleged suicide of a woman.

Rischel D'Souza of Kadra had recently died by suicide. The sub-inspector in question, prima facie, has shown negligence in conducting the probe and in following the procedure, including the post-mortem, in the case. Hence, the officer is placed under suspension pending enquiry, the SP said.

The woman had ended her life at her house on January 9.

The family members of the deceased woman had lodged a complaint with Kadra police, blaming Rischel's friend Chirag Kotarkar for her death.

Expressing their displeasure over police inaction, the family members and Christian organisations have alleged that the suspect has not been arrested despite lodging a complaint a week back.

Cabinet reshuffle buzz exposes Muslim leadership tussle

Zameer, Rizwan in seniority duel; Community may get 3 berths

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Speculation over a possible Cabinet reshuffle post the special session of the legislature has once again turned the spotlight on how the Congress balances Muslim representation in the government.

The rejig is likely to allocate up to three Cabinet berths to Muslim legislators, as the party hopes to replace 50% of the ministers, who will be assigned party work ahead of the crucial local body elections and the 2028 Assembly elections.

With prominent Muslim faces like the late Jaffer Sharief, C M Ibrahim and Roshan Baig now absent, there is a rush among the second-rung leadership to emerge as the tallest leader from the community.

The recent remarks of Zaid Khan, actor-son of Wakf Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, that his father had "helped" secure the Congress ticket for Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad in the 2023 polls have exposed internal rivalries.

Rizwan's supporters dismissed the remark as Zameer's attempt to claim seniority and pointed out that Rizwan's political career predates Zameer's entry into the Congress.

Rizwan rose through the NSUI and Youth Congress, served twice as state Youth Congress president, worked as an AICC secretary and contested (and lost) the Bangalore Central Lok Sabha seat in the 2014 and 2019 elections, they point out.

Zameer, a four-time MLA from Chamarajpet, joined the Congress only in March 2018 after quitting the JD(S).

Both leaders are aligned with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, represent Bengaluru constituencies and belong to the Urdu-speaking Sunni sect, which forms a large section of the state's Muslim population.

However, Zameer's overzealous outreach during communal incidents like the DJ Halli–KG Halli riots, the old Hubballi violence and the contentious Wakf land notices to farmers has caused discomfort within the party. Rizwan, by contrast, is seen as a quieter, organisation-based leader.

Last elections, Shantinagar MLA N A Haris (also BDA chairperson) had sought a party ticket for his son Mohammad Nalapad, ex-state Youth Congress president, from Shivajinagar, despite Rizwan holding the seat. Of the nine Muslim MLAs, Zameer and Rahim Khan are ministers.

Adding to the churn are Naseer Ahmed, political secretary to the CM, and Saleem Ahmed, chief whip in the Legislative Council. Saleem has openly stated his claim: "I am also a ministerial aspirant. I was the only working president who was not included in the Cabinet last time".

Saleem belongs to the smaller Beary community like Speaker U T Khader and Haris.

DKS camps in Delhi, yet to get appointment with Rahul

Calls on Kharge; attends meetings on Assam polls

D K SHIVAKUMAR
Deputy Chief Minister

"Like other politicians, I also do politics. We do try to meet the party's top leaders and seek appointments. I don't want to talk to the media about these meetings. Time will answer all the questions.

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has been unable to meet Congress top leader Rahul Gandhi as the latter is busy with other engagements and his appointment with the leader of the Opposition yet to be confirmed.

The deputy CM is likely to return to Bengaluru on Monday. Shivakumar, who arrived in the national capital on Friday to attend to matters related to the upcoming elections in Assam, continued to stay here in the hope of meeting Rahul. The party has appointed the KPCC president as an observer for the polls in the north eastern state.

Although he travelled to Bidar on Saturday to attend the funeral of senior Congress leader Bheemanna Khandre, he returned to Delhi the same day.

On Sunday, Shivakumar attended an online meeting from Karnataka Bhavan. The meeting, convened by senior Congress leaders, focused on preparing the party's strategy for protests against VB G-RAM-G.

The deputy CM, who is trying to replace Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in line with a rumoured power-sharing pact, sought an appointment with Rahul to discuss the leadership issue.

However, Rahul's office is yet to confirm his appointment for a meeting, Congress sources said.

On Friday, Shivakumar called on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and held discussions with him.

He has cancelled his visit to Davos for the World Economic Forum meeting in the wake of engagements back home.

Separately, Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan called on Congress general secretary (incharge of party affairs in Karnataka) Randeep Surjewala at Kaithal in Haryana on Sunday.

Zameer's office said the meeting focused on political developments in state. No details were provided.

KITE FLIGHT

A large number of people fly their kites at the Kite Festival at Tanneerbhavi beach in Mangaluru on Sunday. DH PHOTO/FAKRUDDIN H

Ashoka smells Rs 2.5k-cr scam in Excise dept, demands Timmapur's resignation

BENGALURU, DHNS: Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka alleged on Sunday that there was a Rs 2,500-crore scam in the Excise Department and demanded Excise Minister R B Timmapur's resignation.

"The government sets revenue collection targets for departments. However, in the Excise Department, licenses are being auctioned off. Excise Deputy Commissioner Jagadish Nayak was caught by Lokayukta police while accepting a bribe of Rs 25 lakh. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is directly responsible for this. If Timmapur doesn't resign, Siddaramaiah himself must be considered responsible," Ashoka said while addressing a press conference.

The leader of the Opposition noted that the Congress was "using" Mahatma Gandhi to oppose Viksit Bharat — Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB — G RAM G) but was "drowning" the entire state in addiction and "destroyed" Gandhi's ideals.

Ashoka noted that a bribe of Rs 1.25 crore was sought for a CL-7 license, and that a Rs 1.5-crore bribe was fixed for a CL-2 license. He also noted that a total of Rs 92 crore was sought in bribes for CL-9 licences and Rs 2.5 crore was sought for microbrewery licence.

"Altogether, it adds up to Rs 2,500 crore in bribes. This is being sent for the Assam elections." Ashoka alleged that an audio had surfaced, where it was mentioned that the money should be given to the minister or his son. He stated that the BJP would take the fight against "corruption" in the Excise Department to its "logical conclusion."

KSRTC wins award for green initiatives

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) said it had won the Grow Care India National Environment Excellence Award 2025 in the gold category under the transport sector for the successful implementation and effective management of eco-friendly initiatives.

The award was presented in New Delhi on January 17 by Mrinalini Shrivastava, Director and Joint Secretary, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and Rajesh Goyal, Member, Delhi Cantonment Board, to K Venkatesh, Divisional Controller, Chitradurga division, on behalf of the KSRTC.

Ballari violence: BJP lacks moral right to seek CBI probe, says CM

MYSURU, DHNS: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said that the BJP leaders had no moral right to ask the government to hand over the probe into the Ballari clash to the CBI.

He told reporters here: "During their tenure, BJP did not entrust any case to CBI, whenever we demanded. As CM, I have transferred eight cases to CBI. Let them mention one case they have given to CBI for probe". He said the recent BJP rally in Ballari was politically motivated.

Satish says high command must end confusion over chief minister's post

DAVANGERE, DHNS: Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi has said that the high command should end the confusion over change of leadership in the state.

Satish Jarkiholi

"The party leaders are well aware of the debate over chief minister's post. All MLAs of the party feel that this should be resolved at the earliest. Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar is also Assam in-charge of the Congress. Therefore, nothing special should be read into his Delhi visit," Jarkiholi said.

He was speaking to reporters at Gopenahalli in Channagiri taluk on Sunday.

Outgoing Paryaya seer Sugunendra Theertha Swami of Puttige mutt greets Vedavardhana Theertha Swami of Shiroor mutt after the latter ascended the Paryaya Sarvajna Peetha at a ceremony at the Krishna temple in Udupi in the wee hours of Sunday. Scion of the erstwhile royal family of Mysuru, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Charamaja Wadiyar, and others were present.

Shiroor mutt seer takes charge of his first Paryaya in Udupi

Puttige seer ushers him in after 2 yrs at Krishna temple's helm

UDUPI, DHNS

At the auspicious Mangala muhurtham, Vedavardhana Theertha Swami of Shiroor mutt ascended the sacred Paryaya Sarvajna Peetha amid the resonant chanting of Dwadasha Stotra and Mangalaashtaka, composed by Dwaita philosopher saint Madhwacharya in the wee hours of Sunday.

The 20-year-old seer received the keys and administrative responsibilities of the Krishna temple from outgoing Puttige mutt seer Sugunendra Theertha Swami, thereby assuming charge of temple administration and conduct of Krishna pooja for the ensuing two-year term.

The incoming seer reached the temple entrance in a magnificent procession accompanied by other seven seers of the Ashta mutts. He was received by the outgoing seer, who earlier performed Visarjana pooja, marking his final offering as Paryaya seer.

The incoming seer then had darshan of Lord Krishna through the Navagraha Kindi, praying for a successful tenure.

In a symbolic gesture signifying the transfer of administrative authority, the outgoing seer handed over the age-old temple keys and the sacred Akshaya Patra — the eternal bowl and spoon — to the Shiroor mutt seer before the idol of Madhwacharya.

Thereafter, the outgoing seer ceremonially offered the Paryaya Sarvajna Peetha to Vedavardhana Theertha, which is made of gold, formally installing him as the new Paryaya seer.

Following the Peetharohana rituals inside the temple, all the seers moved to the Rajangana for the formal Durbar ceremony.

The Durbar hall, artistically designed, reflected the splendour of ritualistic tradition and cultural heritage.

Four of Bhadravathi family go missing in Bhadra canal

SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS: Four members of a family from Arebilachi camp in Bhadravathi taluk were feared drowned in Bhadra right bank canal on Sunday.

According to police, Neelabai (50), her son Ravikumar (23), daughter Swetha (24) and son-in-law Parashuram (28) have gone missing while washing clothes in the canal near the village.

Swetha, along with her husband, had come to her maternal home to take part in the Marikamba fair. All four went to the canal to wash clothes and utensils. When they did not return even after a long time, the villagers, who noticed clothes and utensils on the banks of the canal, informed police.

One of them might have slipped into the canal while washing clothes and three others may also have drowned in the rescue attempt, police said. Fire and emergency personnel, along with local divers and police, have begun a search operation, additional SP A G Kariyappa, who's at the spot, told reporters.

Sandur police register FIR over iron ore theft

BALLARI, DHNS: The Sandur police have registered a first information report (FIR) pertaining to the alleged illegal transportation of ore from the mines owned by National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) under union steel ministry.

On January 16, at 10 am, the police intercepted a truck transporting 20 MT of high-quality iron ore near Babayya cross in Sandur. The truck was transporting ore from "C" Block of NMDC mines in Sandur.

Upon getting information, officials of the mines and geology department too arrived at the spot and verified the documents.

It emerged that the truck had no permit to transport ores. The driver of the truck informed the officials that ore was being transported to a sponge iron factory in Nemakallu of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

However, the officials grew suspicious. They lodged a complaint with the Sandur police.

Deputy director of mines and geology department Dwitiya E C said that they unearthed illegal transportation of ore and that an FIR had been filed in this regard.

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Voluntary retirement application does not guarantee approval: HC

BENGALURU, DHNS

The submission of an application for voluntary retirement does not, as of right, entitle to be granted a voluntary retirement from service, the Karnataka High Court has observed in a recent judgement.

A division bench comprising Justices Anu Sivaraman and Vijayakumar A Patil said this while dismissing an appeal filed by a dismissed driver of the state-owned Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC).

The driver, L Srinivas, a resident of Chitradurga, had joined KSRTC in 1997 and had a history of unauthorised absence from duty. In 2010, he was dismissed from service for unauthorised absence which was set aside by the Labour Court in 2011. After he remained absent unauthorisedly from January 18, 2013, a disciplinary inquiry was conducted. On July 10, 2015, he was removed from service after the charges were proved.

This time, on his appeal, the labour court held that though the enquiry was fair and proper, it set aside the dismissal, directing the KSRTC to consider his application for voluntary retirement. The application for voluntary retirement was allegedly submitted during the enquiry proceedings.

A single bench, on KSRTC's petition challenging the order of the labour court, noted that despite being given a second chance, the driver remained absent from January 18, 2013, to October 7, 2013. The single bench held that once the labour court found the enquiry to be fair and proper and there was no evidence to justify the absence, it could not have set aside the dismissal order.

Challenging this order, Srinivas contended that he was suffering from "R lower limb buerger disease and low back ache", for which doctors advised continuous treatment, bed rest and to do light work.

The division bench noted that the single bench specifically considered the contentions and held that the driver continued unauthorised absence despite giving repeated warnings and punishments. The bench also said that the driver had not substantiated his case that he had made proper leave applications with medical certificates before the appropriate authorities.

"If his absence was on account of medical reasons, there was no reason why he did not submit proper applications with medical certificates before the employer. Moreover, apart from blandly stating that he was entitled to the benefit of Section 47 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, nothing was placed on record to prove that any request was made at the relevant time for assignment of light duties on account of any physical incapacity," the division bench said. The court further said, "In a case where the employee has a continuous history of unauthorised absence which is specifically taken note of by the labour court, the labour court ought not to have ordered the reinstatement or the consideration of the voluntary retirement scheme application."

BJP will end TMC's 'maha jungle raj': PM

Modi, from Page 1

As the BJP chose Singur as the venue for Modi's rally on Sunday, speculation was rife that the prime minister might use the opportunity to promise the return of Tata Motors or any other big corporate house. But he did not make any such promise, but stressed that good governance and maintenance of law and order were the prerequisites for the inflow of investment and establishment of industries in the state.

"Every district of West Bengal has its own unique strength, and the people of this state possess intelligence, talent and enterprise. The BJP will draw up a separate development roadmap for each district to ensure that the maximum benefits reach local communities," Modi said.

If voted to power in West Bengal, the saffron party would implement the "One District, One Product (ODOP) policy to promote and scale up district-specific products, he added.

With the next assembly elections in West Bengal likely to take place in April-May this year, Modi harped on the narrative of the TMC's "Maha Jungle Raj" versus the BJP's promise of good governance.

"A very large number of mothers, sisters, and farmers have gathered here. All of them have come with one shared hope — a hope for a real change. There is a collective resolve to end the 15-year-long maha jungle raj (of the TMC)," Modi said, adding: "The BJP has once again resisted the return of jungle raj in Bihar, and now it's the turn of West Bengal, which too, is prepared to say goodbye to the TMC's maha jungle raj".

He reiterated the BJP's allegation that the TMC government was facilitating illegal migrants from Bangladesh to India and helping them settle in West Bengal.

K'taka plans Goa-style coastal...

Tourism, from Page 1

It is Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy D K Shivakumar's vision to develop the state's coastline, he added.

K V Thrilok Chandra, Secretary, Tourism Department, said: "We are planning both ocean and backwaters cruise in the coastal areas. It will be under a revenue-sharing model. The government will provide the land while private players will build the infrastructure."

The development will involve convergence of multiple themes including eco-tourism, cultural tourism, cuisine tourism, inland water tourism, maritime tourism, adventure tourism and wellness tourism.

For the promotion of coastline, annual festivals will be organised showcasing the destinations, local culture and cuisine. There will be beachside events, live performances and markets. The department plans to promote the festivals at a global level to attract tourists, according to the proposal.

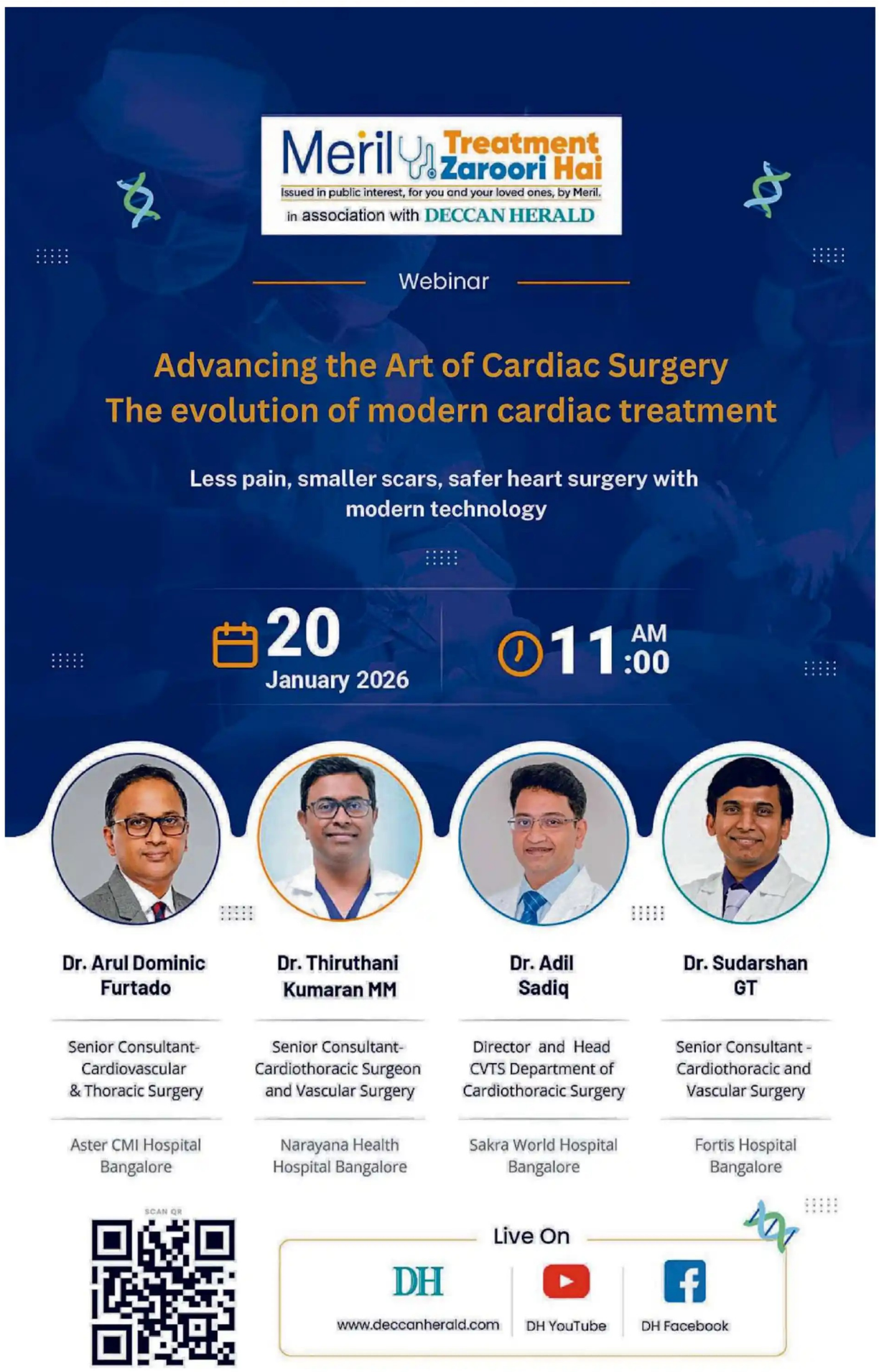
More than eight crore tourists visited coastal Karnataka in 2023, accounting for 12-15% of the total tourist footfall in the state, department data shows.

Yathish Baikampady, CEO, Panambur Beach Tourism, said, "The developments are welcome if they empower the locals and blend with the local culture. Coastal Karnataka has it all with good food, temples, culture and beaches. Films such as Kantara have also boosted tourism. Because of the surfing schools, tourism has increased and it has all been organic."

Coastal Karnataka also has an active night life because of Kola, Yakshagana and other all-night performances, he added. "If the government wants to keep establishments open, law enforcers should be on the same page," he said.

The department has also applied for Blue Flag certification for seven beaches. These include Someshwara, Ullal, Sashithlu, Asare, Kodi Kanyana, Padukere, Kodi Kundapura, Shirur and Bailur beaches as a part of the development plans.

Blue Flag is a voluntary tag given by the Denmark-based nonprofit Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) to environment-friendly and clean beaches that comply with hygienic guidelines.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In Joint Collaboration of District Administration, Belagavi & Backward Classes Welfare Department
and Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Kshetra Development Authority

Dedication of "Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Museum (Veerabhoomi)" and

Statue of Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna

Near the lake of Samadhi and Bhoomi Puja Programme of various works

Date: 19th January, Monday. Time: 12.00 Noon.
Venue: Nandagad Rural Education Society Ground, Nandagad, Khanapur Taluk

- **Consrtuction of Sainik School** in the name of Sangolli Rayanna on an area of 100 Acres in Sangolli Village
- **Construction of Museum** at the place of the Banyan Tree in Nandagad where Sangolli Rayanna was hanged **(Veerabhoomi)**
- **Development of lake** near the Samadhi of Sangolli Rayanna in Nandagad
- **Construction of Shouryabhoomi** in Sangolli Village which will depict the history of Rayanna's childhood up to his hanging

Divine Presence

Srimad Jagadguru Sri Revanasiddeshwara Simhasanadhishwara
Paramapoojya Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Dr. Niranjanandapuri Mahaswamigalu
Kaginele Mahasamsthana, Kanaka Gurupeeta, Sri Kshetra Kaginele

Inauguration by

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister and Chairman,
Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Kshetra Development Authority

Chief Guests

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Water Resources

Sri Satish L. Jarkiholi
Hon'ble Minister for Public Works and Belagavi District in-Charge Minister

Smt. Lakshmi R. Hebbalkar
Hon'ble Minister for Women and Child Development & Differently Abled and Senior Citizens Empowerment

Sri Tangadagi Shivaraj Sangappa
Hon'ble Minister for Backward Classes Welfare & Kannada and Culture

Sri Byrathi S. Suresh
Hon'ble Minister for Urban Development

Presided by

Sri Vithal Somanna Halagekar
Hon'ble MLA, Khanapur Assembly Constituency

Sri Tangadagi Shivaraj Sangappa, Hon'ble Minister for Backward Classes Welfare & Kannada and Culture & **Sri H.M. Revanna,** Hon'ble Chairman, Karnataka State Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority and former Minister on a visit to the Museum

Special Invitees

Sri H.M. Revanna
Hon'ble Chairman, Karnataka State Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority and former Minister

Sri Ashok M. Pattan
Hon'ble Government Chief Whip, Legislative Assembly

Sri Prakash B Hukkeri
Hon'ble Special Representative of GoK, New Delhi

Sri Bharamagowda A. Kage
Hon'ble Chairman, North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation Limited

Sri Mahantesh Shivanand Koujalagi
Hon'ble Chairman, Karnataka State Financial Corporation

Hon'ble MPs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Hon'ble MLAs & MLCs, Hon'ble Chairman of Belagavi Urban Development Authority, Hon'ble Chairpersons of various Boards and Corporations, Hon'ble Presidents of Nandagad and Kasaba Nadagad Gram Panchayaths and other dignitaries will participate in the programme as Special Invitees.

As is enshrined in our Constitution to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.

All are cordially invited

karnataka information

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

BJP on top after civic poll victories

The ruling BJP-led Mahayuti has asserted its dominance in Maharashtra with an emphatic victory over the Opposition in last week's civic elections. The BJP is the largest party in the state now and is in a commanding position across all regions. The party and its allies, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), have won 26 of the state's 29 municipal corporations. The BJP is the largest party in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, the country's richest municipal corporation (BMC). It is set to have a BJP mayor, marking an end to three decades of Shiv Sena rule. The BJP will also control most of the state's important corporations, such as Pune, Nagpur and Nashik. The party's dominance is a continuation of the dominance it established in the 2024 Assembly elections and the civic elections held last year.

The results show that the BJP's slogan of triple engine growth has appealed to urban Maharashtra. The credit goes to the party rather than the alliance. There was competition between constituents of the alliance. The Ajit Pawar-led NCP joined hands with the Sharad Pawar-led faction of the party, but the alliance as a whole was not weakened by such dissensions. The Mahayuti is not an ideologically coherent alliance, but it is a platform on which parties came together to share power. It has now proved that it can retain power and extend it to all levels of the administration. The BJP, which was once the Shiv Sena's minor partner, is now the anchor of the alliance, and holds the position the Congress once enjoyed in the state. It was through clever political management, which included splitting and weakening the Opposition, that it established itself as the state's No 1 party, and it does not seem to have any challenge in the near future.

Three decades of Shiv Sena rule come to an end in Mumbai

If Eknath Shinde's rebellion weakened the Thackeray legacy in Maharashtra, the loss of the BMC has dealt a decisive blow against it. The coming together of the Thackeray cousins Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray could not salvage it, and their campaign based on the narrow 'Marathi *manoos*' plank failed to make an impact. That is a sign that cosmopolitan Mumbai has rejected the exclusivist and nativist pitch once championed by the Shiv Sena. The desperate alliance between the NCP factions did not make an impact even in their strongholds. The Congress has been reduced to insignificance in most parts of the country's most urbanised state. The fact that the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) of the Congress, the Shiv Sena UBT and the NCP-SP could not present a respectable fight shows how one-sided the state's politics has become.

Film certification board's overreach

Film certification has been problematic for long, and in recent months, considerations not normally associated with it are seen to be influencing it. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has the mandate to certify films on the basis of their suitability for public viewing, but the exercise has sometimes turned into control through censorship. The recent controversies over two films —actor Vijay's *Jana Nayagan* and Sivakarthikeyan's *Parasakthi* — show the CBFC acting beyond itself. The impact is big because cinema is a mass medium with a reach larger than other art forms; it can influence areas such as finance, law and order, and politics. The developments have assumed extra significance in Tamil Nadu, where films have had an important role to play in society and politics. While films have influenced politics and may even be political, the CBFC should not be influenced by politics.

The CBFC suggested such a large number of cuts in *Parashakti* just before its release that it raised doubts about its motives. The film has a theme set in 1960s Tamil Nadu, when the state saw the rise of the Dravidian and anti-Hindi movements. The film made a fictional rendering of historical events through the filmmaker's perspective. But the problem with the large-scale changes and revisions sought by the CBSE is that they change the narrative and even the perspective of the film. That is not within the remit of the CBFC. Words like "public order", "decency" and "morality" are often used as tools of censorship. Certification should not become censorship.

Its actions against two Tamil films raise strong suspicions about its motives

Jana Nayagan, a big budget film which was to for release on Pongal, is caught in legal wrangles. It had been issued a U/A 16+ certificate but the CBFC chairman decided to refer it to a Revising Committee days before its scheduled release. An order of the Madras High Court, directing the CBFC to issue the certificate, was reversed by another bench, and on appeal, the Supreme Court told the filmmakers to go back to the High Court. The High Court decision is awaited. The delay and the legal battles have major financial implications. It has been observed that the CBFC uses its power selectively. *Jana Nayagan*'s travails may have been occasioned by its political content or message. The CBFC should not be guided by any considerations other than the principles laid down by the Cinematography Act and the rules under it. But it follows other guidelines.

SHAKING THE REGIME

Iran's uprising and its fallout

All options — regime change, reform, and repression — will have consequences both for the country and the world

ALVITE NINGTHOUJAM

In what could be considered the largest anti-government protest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iranian citizens have taken to the streets since late December 2025, demonstrating against the regime's deteriorating economic management and demanding political change.

Rising inflation, exacerbated by Western sanctions, alongside restrictions on women's employment, has fuelled Iran's economic crisis. Compounding these grievances are long-standing frustrations over strict social restrictions imposed on women since the theocratic regime assumed power in 1979.

These socio-economic challenges have persisted for years, yet civilian efforts to advocate for reform or transformation have been systematically suppressed by authorities closely aligned with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, particularly the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The ongoing developments underscore widespread disillusionment and a profound desire for comprehensive change in the country.

The swelling protests have fuelled perceptions that the Supreme Leader's influence is weakening, challenging his legitimacy. However, predicting the regime's imminent collapse would be premature.

'Regime change' would require sustained and substantial grassroots mobilisation within Iran to materialise. Critical questions remain regarding protesters' resilience against state repression and their capacity to sustain momentum.

Unlike the 1979 revolution, the ongoing uprising lacks a unifying figure, significantly impacting its trajectory and effectiveness. While Reza Pahlavi, son of the deposed Shah of Iran, has appealed for a "free, peaceful Iran" and emerged as a potential alternative to the current regime, it remains unclear whether the Iranian society will accept him as a fitting replacement.

Amid these developments, the regime is likely to remain resilient in preserving theocratic rule, ensuring that the foundational values of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, namely, Shiite ideology, remain intact.

Several plausible scenarios merit consideration regarding Iran's internal trajectory. First, the regime could become increasingly repressive once the protesters' momentum diminishes.

While authorities have reportedly halted executions following US pressure, the possibility of full regime control cannot be ruled out.

Second, protesters may continue demonstrating resilience in their commitment towards toppling the regime and achieving political transformation. This outcome would require considerable strength, substantial financial and moral support, and cohesive leadership to guide the movement's direction. Without clear political and strategic vision, a power vacuum could plunge the country into prolonged socio-political crises.

Third, the regime may be compelled to negotiate with the protesters. This scenario remains uncertain, as the regime's commitment to preserving Shiite ideology makes substantive compromise on core socio-cultural principles unlikely, though limited economic reforms may be possible.

What does it mean for the US, Israel, the GCC?

Israel: Given its longstanding antagonism with Iran following the 1979 revolution, Israel views regime change as vital, perceiving Tehran as an 'existential threat' to its survival. This outcome represents Israel's preferred resolution to the ongoing crisis. Its immediate concern is Iranian retaliation should the US initiate military operations.

Iranian leadership has already warned that Tehran would strike back against Israel and US bases in the region, with both adversaries having engaged in direct military confrontations in 2024 and 2025.

However, should the Iranian regime survive this uprising, it will continue to pose a major challenge for Israel. Even in the event of a change in government in Iran, rebuilding trust between the two nations that have been completely estranged since 1979 would require considerable effort and time.

The United States: Like Israel, the US seeks a regime in Iran amenable to Washington, Israel, and regional allies. Following the hostage crisis (November 1979 and January 1981), Iran and the US have remained adversaries despite recent attempts to mend ties.

While the Trump administration favours regime change, it remains uncertain whether he would prioritise this or negotiate with the Iranian leadership to avert a regional catastrophe.

Even if the regime survives, the US would seek an Iranian leadership that de-emphasises its nuclear programme for military purposes, ceases support for regional proxies, adopts a less antagonistic posture toward Israel and Arab neighbours, and limits alignment with countries like Russia and China.

Successfully negotiating such a deal would provide the Trump administration greater leverage in pursuing its Middle East policy with fewer constraints.

These demands, however, will be difficult to negotiate given the entrenched mistrust between Tehran and Washington, as well as with Israel. Nonetheless, US military action, including air operations and cyber attacks, against the IRGC-linked establishments cannot be ruled out, a scenario that could engulf much of the Middle East, particularly the Gulf region.

The Arab Gulf States: While neighbouring Arab Gulf states may remain relatively unconcerned as long as uprisings remain confined to Iran, the uncertainty surrounding potential US military action has become a grave concern.

Although a weakened Iran would serve the strategic interests of the Gulf states, they oppose military adventurism from the US or Israel that could trigger a broader regional conflict. This apprehension stems primarily from the high probability of Iran targeting US military bases located in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the UAE, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey.

Compounding this is the potential disruption to oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately 20% of the world's oil passes, severely impacting the regional economies that rely heavily on hydrocarbon trade.

Moreover, GCC countries in particular have no desire to be drawn into another conflict as they undertake significant socio-economic reforms programmes aimed at reducing oil dependency.

Disrupting the gradually improving ties with Iran would also be contrary to their interests. This likely explains why Saudi Arabia informed Iran that Riyadh would not allow its airspace or bases to be used for any military operations against Iran. Tellingly, Arab Gulf states prefer a regional balance of power between Israel and Iran and not allowing either rival to exercise dominance over the other.

The current Iranian uprising underscores the deep-seated socio-political and economic problems that have plagued the country under theocratic rule since 1979. Even if the present phase of unrest subsides in the coming days, the underlying grievances demand substantial structural reforms, particularly to improve living standards across multiple fronts.

Such transformations, however, will be a protracted endeavour, as Iran's challenges are deeply entrenched and cannot be resolved through superficial adjustments alone. The path forward, whether through regime change, negotiated reform, or continued repression, will have profound implications not only for Iran's domestic stability but also for the broader geopolitical landscape of the Middle East.

(The writer is deputy director, Symbiosis School of International Studies, Pune)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Living in the no-gift zone

Saying no became a lesson in living lighter

SAHANA PRASAD

'Thank you, very thoughtful of you!' I said. "But I am sorry; I cannot accept this gift." She looked crestfallen. "You don't like the colour? We can exchange it for your preference. I have preserved the bill." I patted her head and said a firm no. It wasn't the colour or the material, but my personal oath not to take anything home, except groceries, milk, vegetables and the like, I assured her.

The occasion was a wedding, where close family members are given saris or dresses as return gifts. Most Indian families practise give-and-take, making it an important ritual at functions. Inevitably, it leads to a pile-up in one's wardrobe, adding to already cluttered spaces.

For the past eight years, I have practised and perfected the art of saying "no" to gifts of any kind. I have also completely stopped buying stuff. Yes, you read it right! Every object adds to our physical and mental space. Each becomes a responsibility and an attachment. As we grow older, we need neither. A minimalistic lifestyle suits ageing, much like less make-up does.

When my mother passed away, clearing her wardrobe, filled with exclusive and expensive saris, was an immensely painful experience. I gritted my teeth and kept a couple in her memory. The rest I donated to our house helps and her nurse, and I gave away the remaining lot to a charitable organisation near my house. It was not an easy decision, but it brought a sense of relief.

"But why? You are still young; you wear saris regularly!" my friends told me. "I already have a big wardrobe of saris. Tell me, how many can I wear? And most importantly, what happens to them after me?" A valid question, isn't it? There is no limit to our desires and no limit to how much we can hoard.

The same dilemma arose when my daughter-in-law received a bunch of saris as wedding presents. "I can't carry all this to the US. You can use whichever you like. Let me leave them in your wardrobe," she said. My mind wavered – such beautiful saris! As my fingers stroked the material, my resolve hardened. "No. Please give them to your mother. Let her safeguard them or use them."

A friend once brought a pre-loved *kurta* to a meet. "Can I give you this? I haven't used it much, and I thought it might suit you. "Sure," I said, adding quickly, "But no more gifts, okay? I don't want to accumulate even pre-loved dresses. It defeats the purpose of not buying new ones."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Flawed SIR process needs overhaul

The SIR process is flawed, as evident from the notice issued to Bharat Ratna and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. The Election Commission's approach seems to be overly technical, lacking a broader perspective. This has led to allegations of deliberate humiliation of a prominent scholar critical of the BJP-led Union government. If someone of Sen's stature faces such treatment, ordinary citizens battling electoral roll deletions are likely to suffer more. The EC should adopt a systematic approach, involving states and voters, to ensure a proper and thorough process

S Kamat, Mysuru

Global order threatened

President Trump's threat of tariffs to secure Greenland marks a shift from diplomacy to geopolitical coercion. By framing a sovereign territory as a transactional asset, Trump risks undermining the rules-based order that has defined post-war stability. True national security relies on the voluntary cooperation of allies, not the forced acquisition of land. Using trade penalties to bypass the self-determination of the people of Greenland people sets a dangerous precedent: it suggests that sovereignty is no longer absolute.

Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Health for children

I refer to 'Eggs and milk powder in Kalyana Karnataka...' (Jan 18). The decline in malnutrition among school children in Kalyana Karnataka is welcome news. To build on this, regular medical check-ups should also be conducted in schools to detect health issues early and nip them in the bud.

A K Shariff, Mysuru

Trains for whom?

The PM has rightly observed that Indian trains are much appreciated by foreign nationals. But it overlooks the fact that foreigners often travel in premium trains, unlike the general Indian population, who continue to suffer due to poor management.

Pahal Agarwal, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

God above has decided that there will be a Mahayuti Mayor.

Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra CM

I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do, because I notice it always coincides with their own desires.

Susan B Anthony

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

AI, copyright and the public domain

Generative AI has challenged norms of copyright law in ways no prior technology ever has

SUNDAR ATHREYA H

The public domain is the backbone of copyright law. The law functions on a delicate balance between the rights of creators, owners and users. It ensures that future creators can rely on previous works, once their protection period has expired, to generate new creations. Though the duration of copyright protection is considered long by many experts (life of the author plus 70 years in the USA, and life of the author plus 60 years in India), it is tailored to balance the market interests of both owners and creators.

Beyond the said period, a work is free for any user to use, adapt or remix as part of their creative work (provided it does not mutilate the previous work in any form or erode the moral rights of the creator). In 2026, the first set of Nancy Drew books and Disney's 1930 animated film Mickey Mouse from The Chain Gang will enter the public domain. These works will then be available for any user to publish or adapt. In India, the works of famed singer G N Balasubramaniam will enter the public domain this year.

Public Domain Day is celebrated across cultures as a way to nurture creativity. The 2026 edition is unlike any other in the past. Over the last year, generative AI has expanded beyond the imagination of both its users and its creators. It has challenged existing norms of copyright law in ways no previous technology ever has. This may diminish the importance of the public domain in the future.

Generative AI, like its human counterpart, learns from existing material to create new works. This is not a problem *per se*, since copyright law was designed to promote learning and creativity after all. In its present form, the law does not distinguish between human learners and generative AI platforms. The only difference is in the massive speed at which AI systems can train and create. At present, these platforms learn from both copyrighted and non-copyrighted material to generate further.

For instance, the previous year saw the famous Ghibli trend surface on the Internet, where social media users posted their own images styled after Studio Ghibli works. It would not have been possible for AI platforms to generate such images unless they had been trained on those works. The resulting creations could potentially challenge the market for the original works on which they were trained. This sparked a copyright controversy, though nothing emerged of it. At present, copyright-respecting countries are responding to such 'AI training' through their respective policies.

In this process, India has signalled a stand that would seemingly balance the interests of generative AI platforms and copyright owners. It aims to allow AI platforms to train on both copyrighted and non-copyrighted works by obtaining a blanket licence from a body that would manage copyrighted material in exchange for a statutorily fixed royalty fee. This complex response as suggested by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade in a recently released white paper.

Somehow, India's response challenges the existing idea of the 'public domain'. This has the scope to alter the future of copyright law. At present, users can adapt or reuse works only after the expiry of copyright; however, the proposed Indian measure would change this. It suggests that generative AI platforms could train on works even before their entry into the public domain. Copyright owners or creators, meanwhile, cannot specifically pinpoint the exact occurrence of infringement within the vast trove of material being used.

The response also signals that generative AI companies/users cannot bypass existing paywalls for AI training. Although this is a step in the right direction, it raises deeper concerns for the public domain. Copyright owners could begin to lock "public accessibility" behind paywalls to safeguard their interests. This would make it difficult for both human users and AI platforms to access works (even when such access is legally permitted), let alone train on them. This scenario is already common in the publishing industry, where research meant to nourish public knowledge is often inaccessible behind paywalls. Now, this could extend beyond the terrain of academia.

Whether the policy promotes the interests of generative AI companies or those of copyright owners, it is the public domain that stands to suffer. While generative AI platforms are logically expected to grow in the future, the public domain and the interests of creators should not be completely abandoned.

(The writer is an assistant professor at KIIT School of Law)

'India is now mimicking Europe – the very damage Gandhi warned us against'

While secularism refers to the separation of religion and State, debates have persisted about how it differs from religious pluralism. Akeel Bilgrami delves into the genesis of secularism, different ideological strands in the Indian freedom movement, and the roots of contemporary Hindutva nationalism. Excerpts.

Akeel Bilgrami, *philosopher and professor at Columbia University, in conversation with* **Sujay B M**

THE DEEP TAKE

● You're here as a part of the jury for the Infosys prize. Could you tell us something about that?

This is an annual prize in six different areas, and I am on the jury for the humanities and social sciences. I think it's very worthwhile, partly because the winner then has to spend a month of sabbatical lecturing in educational institutions in India. Anything promoting intellectual exchange is great.

● Can you explain the historic and material conditions in which Western secularism arose?

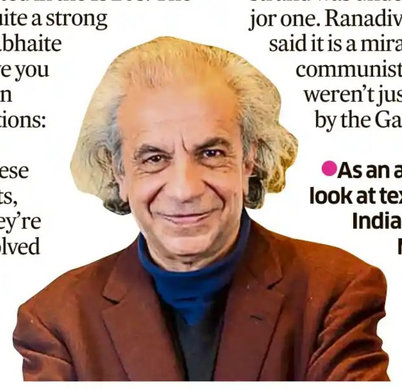
Western secularism arose because of certain consequences of European nationalism. For centuries, State power was justified as the monarch's divine right. But the rise of modern science in the 17th century undermined this justification, leading to the emergence of the entity of the nation. The nation-state became fused, where a feeling for the nation was created to justify the state. A century later, this began to be called nationalism. This national feeling was created by finding an external enemy inside the territory — Protestants in Catholic countries, and *vice versa*. With emerging statistical forms, concepts of majority and minority emerged, and this subjugation was called majoritarianism. This caused backlash by minorities, resulting in civil strife. Secularism emerged to repair the damage.

● Referring to Nehru's *The Discovery of India*, you point out that there was an "unself-conscious pluralism" across the centuries in India...

I am referring to people living side by side, which is undermined by nationalism, as in Europe. When you choose a particular group to despise, you generate the 'other'. But there is no other when people (Hindus and Muslims) worship in the same Dargahs. *The Discovery of India* is very close to Gandhi's thinking. But there were differences between Gandhi and Nehru too regarding their vision for independent India.

● Why do you think the genesis of today's Hindutva nationalism started around the Emergency (1975-1977)?

Many feel the roots of this sort of Hindu nationalism started in the 1920s. The Congress had quite a strong (Hindu) Mahasabhaite element. I believe you need a distinction between two notions: the roots and antecedents. These were antecedents, which means they're probably unresolved questions. But I don't believe the roots set in until the 1970s and 80s.



● During the freedom struggle, while Gandhi, Nehru and some revolutionaries emphasised communal harmony, the RSS stood by its core position: Hindu Rashtra...

All sorts of things were there. There was the left, the Hindu right and the Ambedkarite strand. But the Gandhi-Nehru strand was undeniably the major one. Ranadive (CPI leader) said it is a miracle that the communists survived and weren't just swallowed up by the Gandhi Congress.

Scan to watch the full interview

● As an academic, how do you look at textbook revisions in India, where topics like the Mughals have faded mentions?

It's a brazen form of undermining academic freedom. It also happened in Pakistan, and we are really becoming like Pakistan and Europe. Gandhi said we never had that damage and wondered why we should mimic Europe. But the very same reason why he wasn't a secularist is a reason to be a secularist now. Because we are now mimicking Europe.

● How do you see the denial of bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam?

Criticising the government is anti-national? It doesn't happen unless you've really gone completely authoritarian in the way that McCarthy was. You need some agency to call out corruption. If you can't do that, a real sense of people's sovereignty gets eliminated. UPA 2 fell because people were able to call out corruption, and this government is as corrupt as UPA 2, if not more.

Read the full interview at deccanherald.com

Order in chaos, resilience amid anxieties: Why India remains a stable democracy

K N HARI KUMAR

Part 1

DH PHOTO BY PUSHKAR V

India's Constitutional continuity signals hope in an age marked by political upheavals and democracies under strain. The first essay in a three-part series underlines an erosion of the nation's inclusive foundations, but argues that its institutions are built to resist breaches

Subramanian Swamy, the BJP's former Rajya Sabha member, was involved in studying the draft alternative Constitution. He told *Frontline*, in 2017, that the BJP leadership actively considered working on this draft, but he dissuaded them from going ahead. "For one, I told them that the existing Constitution has enough elements of a Hindu Rashtra. I told them that we already are a *de facto* Hindu Rashtra and there is no need to become a *de jure* one. In my opinion, adopting a new Constitution is not possible unless there is a revolution. Besides, our Constitution already has enough of Hindutva in it," he told the correspondent. He said this was his response when he and a few eminent lawyers were asked about their opinion on adopting a new Constitution. "This was shortly after I had joined the BJP [by merging his Janata Party with it at the time of the 2014 Lok Sabha election]. Swamy said that after the government was formed, he was asked for his opinion on this issue. The draft alternative Constitution had been prepared by "some Vidyarthi Parishad member" in 2000-01, but that document was discarded for now, he said.

The suddenness and swiftness with which the Gen Z protests in Nepal last September took an extremely violent, destructive turn and blew the lid off the political regime has surprised everyone. Recent, similar upheavals in our neighbourhood include: the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh in 2024 and the meltdown of the regime in Sri Lanka in 2022. In 2021, a *coup d'état* replaced the democratically elected government with a military junta in Myanmar, and an insurgency and civil war ensued. Two decades earlier, a Maoist-led decade-long insurgency and civil war in Nepal led to the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republican constitutional democracy. Even earlier, in 1971, a civil war led to the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan.

On the other side of the globe, Donald Trump has, from Day One of his second Presidency as he had promised, effected drastic changes across a wide range of domestic and foreign policy areas aimed at radical transformation, revolutionary even, in the American nation. Also noteworthy is that Trump returned to power after being indicted for the January 2020 attempt to overturn the result of the Presidential election, which he had lost. This was surprising not merely because it occurred in what was considered a centuries-old, stable democracy whose last major crisis was more than 150 years ago. But also because it was generally believed that in the post-Second World War period, the advanced Western nations were immune to the kind of instability and radical transformations that have characterised the Global South and the less developed countries of Eastern Europe.

For better and worse, the radical changes in those other countries in recent decades include: The revolts of the "Arab Spring" in the early 2010s, which brought down some dictatorial regimes, and the attempts, mostly unsuccessful, at setting up stable democratic governments in the aftermath. The slow but progressive authoritarian Islamisation of Atatürk's secular, modernist Turkey, and the breaking of the back of its guardians, the military, by President Erdo an. Going back a few more decades, there have been: The disintegration of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the erstwhile Soviet Union. The violent overthrow of the secular dictatorship of the Shah and the establishment of an Islamic theocracy by a mass upheaval led by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. Besides, there are the many political instabilities and military dictatorships in Latin American countries and in the newly liberated nations of Africa and Asia, after they established independent, nationalist governments following the overthrow of Western imperialist domination, in the aftermath of World War II.

The recent developments in our neighbourhood, particularly, have once again focused analysts' attention on the remarkable stability and continuity of Indian constitutional democracy. Despite being extremely contentious, unruly, and at times violent, Indian politics and public life have been contained, barring the interregnum of the 21-month Emergency, within the overarching constitutional democratic framework established after Independence. In contrast with what Trump attempted, the losing parties have accepted defeats in State and national elections. Even Mrs Indira Gandhi relinquished power after losing in the general elections held under the Emergency. In this article, I aim to explore what explains this phenomenon and identify its contributing factors.

Divisions and exclusions

There are doubtless critics who will question my characterisation, especially with reference to the rise to dominance of the Narendra Modi-led BJP in Indian politics and society. They cite many developments and features to argue that the Modi government has transformed India into a majoritarian or illiberal democracy or electoral autocracy, that the BJP-RSS has captured the Indian State, that there has been "democratic backsliding", or even that there is an undeclared Emergency. The construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on the same land where the Babri Masjid once stood and was earlier demolished, after securing a Supreme Court verdict. The lynchings of Muslims by mobs linked to the Sangh Parivar and kindred organisations, mostly on suspicion of cow slaughter. Illegal punitive demolitions of constructions belonging to, and evictions and deportations of Muslims. The various forms of continuous harassment of Muslims, and to a lesser extent, Christians.

The passing of the Citizenship [Amendment] Act (CAA), which discriminates against Muslims and some other minorities. The campaign and laws against alleged induced religious conversions under slogans like "love jihad", "rice bag", etc., and "urban naxals" aimed at Muslims, Christians and leftist intellectuals, activists and protestors. Detentions of some leftist and Muslim activists and protestors for long periods, with bail given to some of them after considerable delays. Hindutva activists accused of terror were let off by the courts. The policing of social conduct, particularly of women, and diverse forms of attacks on inter-religious, especially Hindu-Muslim, gender relationships. The reduction of Muslim representation in positions of power and influence, such as legislatures and ministries. Forcibly pushing suspected illegal Muslim immigrants into Bangladesh. The attempt to rewrite history from an RSS-BJP interpretation of the "glory" of the Hindus, especially in ancient times, and the exclusion and/or denigration of the role of Muslims historically. Reinterpreting modern science, including medicine, Indian history and culture from a Hindutva perspective, and attempts to effect changes in the medical, education and other systems. Replacing Muslim names with Hindu ones. Giving a Hindu religious colouring to all aspects of public life.

The abrogation of Article 370 and continuing Central intervention in Jammu and Kashmir, bypassing the democratically elected State government. The extra-judicial encounter killings of suspected criminals. Suppression of criticism of and protests against Modi, particularly. The various methods employed to suppress and bulldoze the Opposition in Parliament and outside, including the refusal to allow debate on key issues. The use of Central investigative agencies against Opposition leaders, especially in States where they are in power, to discredit them, to subdue them, to cut off their sources of political funds, and even to bring them into the BJP or NDA fold. The revanchist rhetoric against Pakistan for its proxy terror attacks in India.

Furthermore, certain statements and actions by the NDA Government and its leaders have raised suspicions regarding their intentions and plans. There is the warning from the Prime Minister in his Independence Day Speech last year about the national security risk arising from "democratic imbalance due to infiltration and illegal migration in border areas" and the launch of a High-Powered Demography Mission to address it.

Subsequently, RSS leader D Hosabale, less constrained perhaps because he does not hold a government position, has added "conversion, and higher rate of growth in some communities" as reasons for this alleged imbalance. Taken together with the passing of the CAA in 2019, the statements to extend the National Register of Citizens (NRC) from Assam to other States across the nation, the revised norms for voter registration in the rushed SIR in the run-up to the Assembly elections in Bihar, the extension of SIRs to other States, and the unprecedented, very considerable delay in the national Census without giving any reasons – all these have heightened anxiety. Do these presage attempts to make Muslims (and possibly Christians) second-class citizens, if not disenfranchise them altogether?

In their defence, the BJP-RSS argument would probably be that the NDA Government is only attempting to identify and send back illegal immigrants, and not Muslims who are Indian citizens; that they are trying to reverse "appeasement", not fair and equal treatment; that they are only trying to prevent religious conversions through inducements, fraud and force, not genuine change of faith; and so on.

In addition to the fact that there is much truth in the above charges, even if sometimes exaggerated and one-sided, there are other serious violations of democratic norms, procedures, and institutions. On certain occasions, constitutional authorities and institutions have been less than impartial, if not blatantly partisan, favouring the ruling BJP and Prime Minister Modi. A recent example is the failure of the Election Commission to halt the disbursements through direct cash transfer in the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana, which was launched just ahead of its announcement of the schedule for the Bihar Assembly elections by Prime Minister Modi instead of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, as earlier announced. Not only was the disbursement made just days before each of the two phases of polling, but there was also a promise of substantial additional disbursement after six months. Media reports have noted that the Election Commission suspended disbursements from long-standing welfare schemes during elections in Tamil Nadu in 2004 and 2011, on the grounds that this violated the Model Code of Conduct. A PIL filed at the Patna High Court alleging that the scheme was used to influence voters after the Model Code of Conduct was in force failed to halt the disbursement. Opposition protests to the same effect were also of no avail.

Pointers to the past

Needless to add that such examples are hardly the exception. However, many, if not most, of them arise from weaknesses in the Constitution itself or from the practices of earlier governments, which have paved the way for subsequent governments to exploit them for their very different purposes and ends. One example is the encounter killings of leftist extremists and insurgents, especially in the border states of northeastern and northern India. Other examples include the eviscer-ation of Article 370 from Nehru's time onwards, and the use of Central investigative and intelligence agencies against Opposition leaders, a practice Indira Gandhi had begun and often used. On some points, Modi has implicitly claimed that he is more democratic than earlier Congress Prime Ministers. For example, he has charged that those Prime Ministers had misused Article 356 for partisan ends by dismissing democratically elected Opposition State governments 90 times. He could also, justifiably, claim that he has not superseded senior Supreme Court judges, as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi did in the 1970s, in an attempt to control the judiciary. Subsequently, after imposing the Emergency, she completely subjugated the judiciary.

Conversely, when the founders and their successors adopted and established democratic norms, practices, and institutions, those precedents often became entrenched and were much more difficult to violate. Despite Modi's three successive electoral victories in the general elections and many wins in the States, constitutional democracy, in its electoral and party-political aspects at least, continues not merely to survive but thrive. Elections to State and national legislatures are held on time, Opposition parties are vociferous and unyielding in and outside Parliament and State legislatures, results are honoured, and transitions to the winners are smooth and uncontested. Considering that one of the BJP's senior-most leaders, L K Advani, had, early in Modi's tenure as Prime Minister, said that he did not think another Emergency was unlikely because those in power [that is, Modi] lacked commitment to democracy, this is an amazing turnaround. The question arises, what accounts for it?

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 1976

Forget Left-Right row, work for poor: Sanjay Gandhi

Bangalore, January 18
Youth Congress leader Sanjay Gandhi today called upon young men not to get bogged down in the Rightist-Leftist controversy but to take up programmes to help the poor and the down-trodden. Mr. Gandhi asked the youth to take the lead in constructive programmes such as propagation of family planning, adult education and tree planting. He quoted Mahatma Gandhi: "whenever in doubt about a particular programme, judge it whether or not it would help the poor and the downtrodden."

25 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 2001

Agni-II successfully testfired

Balasore, Jan 18 (UNI & PTI)
India successfully test-fired Agni- II, an intermediate range ballistic missile, from the Inner Wheel Island in the Bay of Bengal today, sources said. Agni-II, the longer range and upgraded version of the missile, was testfired at 1011 hours in its final operational configuration. "The flight test results have indicated that mission objectives were met satisfactorily," Prof RN Agarwal, Programme director said. The flight was witnessed by Defence Minister George Fernandes and Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal A Y Tipnis.

OASIS | SURYAKUMARI DENNISON

Putting problems in perspective

January is named after Janus, the ancient Roman god of beginnings and endings. He was traditionally depicted with two faces, one looking back and the other forward. This symbolised the deity's ability to see both the past and the future. As mortals, we cannot glimpse what is to come. We can, however, recall the year gone by.

2025 started peacefully for me, but turned turbulent when some valuables went missing. I knew who had stolen them, but the culprit covered his tracks. Since the police could not act without evidence, my husband and I hired a private detective. That sham Sherlock decamped with the money we paid him when he embarked on his illusory investigation.

"It has been a bad year for you," remarked a young acquaintance. She went on to say that it had been no better for her. Her husband had never held a steady job, and she had been unemployed for a few months. She had two children to educate, and was struggling financially. I was reminded of a former colleague whose husband had recently succumbed to cancer. She too was providing single-handedly for her family.

I realised then that I could not label 2025 as a 'bad year'. Of course, the theft was a black mark on the calendar, and the mere thought of the smooth-talking sleuth upset me. I had to tell myself firmly not to dwell on unsavoury episodes and experiences, and be grateful instead for the good things that had come my way. Not least was the fact that I continued to be favoured with health and strength. Above all, I had woken up to each of 365 days; a blessing denied to so many.

Precious lives were cut short in air crashes, stampedes, bomb blasts, terrorist attacks, landslides, flood and fire. Those were just the disasters that made the headlines in our country. No doubt, similar catastrophes abounded the world over, leaving thousands heartbroken and mourning their loved ones. Even if not personally affected by a horrendous tragedy, every person on the planet would have faced trials and troubles, to a greater or lesser degree. I wish my jewellery would resurface, but reviewing the year that has ended, I try to put my problems in perspective.

US thorium proposal sparks debate on India's nuclear self-reliance

Experts flag issues pertaining to national security, snub to indigenous production

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Concerns are being raised over a proposal to use thorium from the US-based Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) as fuel in India's pressurised heavy-water reactors (PHWRs) over domestically-available thorium and the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)'s homegrown technology.

India's largest power utility, the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), has reportedly entered a joint venture with the Chicago-based CCTE to explore the "development and deployment of Advanced Nuclear Energy for Enriched Life (ANEEL)", a thorium-based fuel for use in domestic PHWRs.

"This development surprises many, as DAE scientists and engineers have spent decades advancing thorium use for power generation, in line with Homi J Bhabha's vision for India's nuclear strategy," said former power secretary E A S Sarma.

In a letter to Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) Chairman Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Sarma asked whether importing the ANEEL fuel would allow the US to oversee its use in the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL)'s PHWRs.

He warned that CCTE would gain access to sensitive information on India's heavy-water usage, and urged the DAE to scrutinise this risk.

Sarma also highlighted potential long-term issues, like the venture planning to produce ANEEL fuel from Indian thorium later.

He also asked whether the DAE and the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) had conducted a thorough techno-economic appraisal of the ANEEL fuel.

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

- NTPC has entered a joint venture with Chicago-based CCTE to explore 'development and deployment' of ANEEL, a thorium-based fuel, for domestic reactors
- Ex-power secy asks whether importing ANEEL will allow US to oversee its use in NPCIL's reactors
- Also warns that move could give CCTE access to sensitive information on India's heavy-water usage

Sarma even noted that Canada's Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) had only preliminarily assessed ANEEL for CANDU (PHWR) reactors, and had not granted a final approval.

He urged the AERB to consult the CNSC and requested the DAE to address these issues, besides briefing the Union Cabinet, Parliament, and the public on the national-interest implications.

More concerns

"Now that the SHANTI Act has opened the floodgates for the entry of private players, including foreign players, in the hitherto prohibited area of nuclear power development, the concerns I have raised above assume great importance," he said.

"I am afraid that as a result of the recent amendments to the mineral laws to permit private mining of beach sands containing Monazite and as a result of the SHANTI Act, the nation may be deviating significantly from the vision set out by Bhabha for promoting self-reliance in the arena of nuclear energy. This is something that the Parliament and the public should take note of," he added.

Game is on, says Shiv Sena (UBT) on Mumbai mayor election

MUMBAI, DHNS: With an interesting number game emerging for the mayoral seat of the cash-rich BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the Shiv Sena (UBT) seems to have launched mind games against its bete noire, Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde, who has lodged all of his party's newly-elected corporators inside a five-star hotel.

"No matter how much you confine them, there are many means of communication; messages can still go through," said Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut.

"Out of fear that someone will kidnap, threaten, or harm them, they have been kept captive at Taj Lands End. Shinde has turned it into a jail," he added.

He urged CM Devendra Fadnavis to take cognisance of the situation and ask the Mumbai Police to initiate action. Going strictly by numbers, the BJP appears well placed to finally clinch the Mumbai mayor's post, a position that has eluded the party for decades.

2 more Naxals killed on 2nd day of op in Bijapur; toll rises to 6

BIJAPUR, PTI: A day after four Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, two more Maoist cadres were neutralised during the same operation in the region on Sunday, said police.

The latest exchange of fire occurred in the morning in the forested hills of the district's north-western region, where a joint team of security forces has been conducting an anti-Naxalite operation, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav said.

Four Maoists were killed during the same operation on Saturday. They were identified as senior cadre Dilip Vedja, who was a divisional committee member, area committee members Madvi Kosa and Lakkhi Madkam, and party member Radha Metta.

All four were active in the National Park Area Committee of the Maoists, the SP said.

The identity of the two Maoists killed on Sunday is yet to be ascertained, he added.

9 killed, 80 hurt as bus overturns in Jharkhand

LATEHAR/GUMLA, PTI: At least nine people, including five women, were killed and over 80 others injured after a bus carrying wedding guests overturned in Jharkhand's Latehar district on Sunday, police said.

"A bus carrying a marriage party was coming from Balrampur district in Chhattisgarh for a wedding at Mahuadanr in Latehar. The bus overturned, and five people died on the spot. Among them, four were women. The injured were taken to a hospital," Superintendent of Police Kumar Gaurav said.

Two persons died during treatment in Latehar hospital, while two in Gumla Sadar hospital.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Vipin Kumar Dubey said 60 injured were admitted to Mahuadanr community health centre and over 20 at a private hospital.

8 soldiers injured in Kishtwar encounter

Joint counter-terror op underway in remote forest

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Eight soldiers were injured after an encounter broke out between security forces and terrorists in a remote forest area in the upper reaches of Kishtwar district in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.

A joint counter-terror operation was continuing in the area, officials said. The exchange of fire took place in the Chatroo area, where security forces had launched a search operation following "specific intelligence inputs". The operation, codenamed Trashi-I, was initiated by the Indian Army's White Knight Corps in coordination with the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

According to officials, a search team established contact with a group of two to three foreign terrorists in the Son Nar area, northeast of Chatroo. The terrorists, believed to be affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), opened indiscriminate fire and lobbed grenades in an attempt to break the cordon. The troops retaliated, triggering intermittent exchanges of fire.

Reinforcements from the army, the Central Reserve Police Force and the police were rushed to the area. Advanced surveillance equipment, including drones, along with sniffer dogs, has been deployed to track the militants.

The White Knight Corps said its troops showed "exceptional professionalism and resolve" while operating in difficult terrain and adverse weather conditions.

Officials said that the encounter in Chatroo is the first such incident reported in the area this year and the second in Kishtwar district in two months. It is also the third encounter involving security forces in the Jammu region this year, after similar operations in the Kahog and Najote forest areas of Kathua district earlier this month.

Three JeM terrorists are believed to be holed up in the Singhpura area of Chatroo. Two terrorist groups, together comprising around seven members, are suspected to be operating in the region, with one group led by Saifullah Balochi and the other by Adil, both Pakistani nationals.

Sources said nearly 35 Pakistani terrorists are believed to be hiding in the forested and mountainous areas of Doda and Kishtwar districts in the Chenab Valley. Counter-terror operations have been intensified during the winter months, when heavy snowfall in higher reaches restricts militant movement and limits their escape routes.

The latest encounter comes amid heightened security concerns across J&K following a spate of suspected cross-border drone sightings along the India-Pakistan border over the past week.

KASHMIR GUNFIGHT

- First encounter this year, 2nd in Kishtwar in two months
- JeM terrorists holed up in J&K's Chatroo forests
- Two to three foreign terrorists open fire, lob grenades
- Army, CRPF, police deploy drones and sniffer dogs

'BJP now first choice': Modi in Assam

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

The verdict of elections in the past couple of years across India suggest that the BJP has become the nation's first choice, whereas the Congress lost the people's faith, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday at a public meeting in poll-bound Assam.

"People's trust for the BJP is growing. In Bihar, despite it being in power for 20 years, people recently gave it record votes and seats. Two days ago, Maharashtra's mayoral and councillor election results, including in Mumbai, saw a record verdict for the BJP for the first time. People in most towns of Maharashtra have given the BJP a chance to serve," said Modi after laying the foundation stone for infrastructure projects worth Rs 6,950 crore.

They include a 35-km-long elevated corridor passing through the famous Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma during the foundation stone laying ceremony for the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor, at Kaliabor, in Nagaon. PTI

In the South, Modi said, the people gave the BJP significant support in Kerala, with the party winning a mayoral post for the first time in the state capital, Thiruvananthapuram.

Targeting the Congress, Modi said the results also conveyed that the country was consistently rejecting the Opposition party's "negative politics".

"Look at Mumbai, the city where the Opposition party was born. It has now been reduced to the fourth or fifth position [there]. In Maharashtra, where they ruled for decades, it has completely shrunk," he said.

"The Opposition has lost the nation's trust because it has no agenda for development, and such a party can never serve the interests of Assam or Kaziranga," said the PM.

Modi also said the BJP government ended rhino-poaching at Kaziranga, the world's biggest home for the one-horned pachyderms, which was a serious issue in 2013 and 2014.

Modi also alleged that the Congress, during its decades-long rule, handed over Assam's soil to infiltrators merely for votes and government formation.

He said infiltration kept increasing under them, and that these infiltrators carried out widespread encroachments with no concern for Assam's history, culture, or faith.

He also claimed that infiltration led to encroachment in animal corridors, promoted illegal poaching, and increased smuggling and other crimes.

He said the BJP government was "effectively tackling" infiltration, and freeing forests, historic cultural sites, and people's land from illegal encroachments.

No alliance with AIUDF for Assam Assembly polls: Gaurav Gogoi

GUWAHATI, PTI: Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday said that the party will not enter into any electoral alliance with the Badruddin Ajmal-led AIUDF for the coming Assembly polls.

Gaurav Gogoi

Addressing meetings at different locations of Hajo-Sualkuchi constituency, Gogoi said, "After the AIUDF's complete failure in the last Lok Sabha elections, its political calculation of crossing the electoral hurdle in the 2026 Assembly elections by aligning with the Congress is entirely misplaced."

The Congress is working out an alliance with several other opposition parties in line with the one worked out for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, from which it had kept out AIUDF.

Urging people's support for building a 'Bor Asom' (greater Assam), he termed Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma as the "most dishonest" CM of the state.

CPM ready to ally with Cong in Bengal, Assam, Puducherry against TMC, BJP

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Setting speculation to rest, the CPM has made it clear that it is open to having an electoral understanding with the Congress "to defeat" the Trinamool Congress and the BJP in the West Bengal Assembly election, even as it is all set to take on the grand old party in Kerala, accusing it of being "found wanting" in fighting the Hindutva forces.

The CPM also said that it will contest the Tamil Nadu election "with DMK and its allies to defeat the BJP and its allies. It is also willing to join hands with Congress and others in Assam and Puducherry.

The decisions came at a three-day meeting of the CPM central committee in Thiruvananthapuram, which ended on Sunday after reviewing the election preparations in the poll-bound states.

The CPM's decision came even as a section led by West Bengal Congress president Subhankar Sarkar is averse to tying up with the Left Front, claiming that their party has not benefited from the electoral understanding in the past. Both Congress and the CPM-led Left Front had electoral understandings in the 2016 and 2021 Assembly elections and the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Congress and the Left Front fought together for the first time in 2016 when Congress won 44 seats, and the CPM got 26. In 2021, the Left Front and the Congress drew a blank. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Congress managed to win one seat, while the Left did not win any. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, both fought against each other, with Congress winning two and the Left none.

"In Bengal, the party will work for the defeat of both the TMC and the BJP, which are trying to polarise the society. We will try to rally all the forces that are ready to work against them," the CPM said in a statement without naming Congress by name. Senior leaders said there is no change in its strategy of pooling all non-BJP, non-TMC votes. However, the party was critical of the Congress in Kerala, where both will fight against each other.

The CPM said it would "expose the BJP-led Union government's denial of rightful dues to Kerala, the fiscal constraints imposed, and the overall attack on federalism" as well as "expose the failure of the Congress to effectively counter this attack on federalism, as the largest opposition party in the Parliament".

"The Congress, especially in Kerala, was found wanting in the fight against communal RSS-BJP ideologically, and this will also be exposed before the people," it added.

In Assam, it said, the CPM will work for the mobilisation of all the anti-BJP parties and forces and defeat the rabidly communal and divisive BJP government. The Left parties are cooperating with Congress in the northeastern state. In Puducherry, it said it will work for the defeat of the BJP alliance government.

TIE-UP ROUTE

- Party to contest Tamil Nadu elections with DMK and its allies
- In Kerala, it will fight Congress, claiming the party failed to counter Centre's attack on federalism
- In Bengal, Cong reluctant to ally with the Left Front, saying it gained no benefit from past tie-ups

Dog on 'divine' loop at UP temple draws crowds

LUCKNOW, DHNS: A temple in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor district has become an unlikely centre of attention after a dog began drawing crowds from nearby areas.

According to reports, the animal has been circling the temple at Nandpur village almost non-stop for the past six days. The dog's behaviour soon attracted villagers, who started flocking to the site, interpreting the sight as something divine.

The canine continues to take rounds of the temple for hours, pausing only briefly before resuming.

A team of veterinarians from a nearby animal shelter has also visited the temple to conduct a medical examination of the dog. They were unable to explain the phenomenon and said that further tests would be required to ascertain the reason.

Reports said thousands of people have visited the temple over the past five days to witness the scene. 'Bhajans' and 'kirtans' have been organised at the temple. Locals have also arranged 'bhandaras' (community feasts) for the visitors.

Videos that went viral on social media showed people worshipping before the dog.

Bail before conviction should be matter of right: Ex-CJI

JAIPUR, PTI: Former chief justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Sunday said bail before conviction should be a matter of right, but asserted that it is a court's duty to examine a case in depth where national security is involved before granting relief.

D Y Chandrachud

He made the remarks at the Jaipur Literature Festival in response to a question from senior journalist Vir Sanghvi, who raised the issue of the Supreme Court recently denying the bail plea of activist Umar Khalid in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case.

Speaking during a session titled 'Ideas of Justice', Justice Chandrachud (retired) said, "Bail before conviction should be a matter of right. Our law is based on a presumption, and that presumption is that everyone is innocent until proven guilty."

"Because, if someone remains an undertrial prisoner for five or seven years and is finally proven innocent, how will you compensate for the time lost?"

He termed the denial of bail by sessions and district courts a matter of concern and said judges fear that their integrity might be questioned.

UP: Sanjay Singh among eight booked in Manikarnika Ghat row

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Sanjay Singh

Pappu Yadav

A day after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claimed that AI-generated videos were used to "mislead" people over the alleged demolitions at Varanasi's Manikarnika Ghat, the police on Sunday registered a case against Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh, Purnia MP Pappu Yadav and six others for hurting religious sentiments.

Besides Singh and Yadav, Haryana Congress leader Jasvinder Kaur, Ashutosh, Pragya Gupta, Manish Singh, Ritu Rathore and Sandeep Dev were also booked in the matter.

Police alleged that the accused tried to incite religious passion, mislead people and disrupt social harmony by circulating misleading information on social media through AI-generated texts and videos regarding the developmental works at the Manikarnika Ghat.

Reacting to the FIR, Singh claimed the redevelopment work had caused destruction at the ghat. Temples were damaged, and a statue of Ahilyabai Holkar was broken, drawing protests from sadhus and others, he alleged.

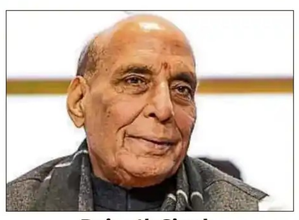
He accused the authorities of targeting him for raising the issue and asserted that he would not be intimidated.

One of the complaints stated that the government of India was compared to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, which triggered anger among the people who have faith in democracy. A police official said that an investigation was underway and action would be taken based on it.

(*With PTI inputs*)

Wars now complex due to new dimensions, says Rajnath

NAGPUR, PTI: Wars have become very complex and are not limited to borders; even energy, trade, tariff, supply chains, technology, and information are now part of their new dimensions, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh here on Sunday.



Rajnath Singh

At the inaugural ceremony of a medium-calibre ammunition facility at Solar Industries here, he said there was a time when defence production was limited to the public sector. The private sector had the capacity and potential, but its participation was not at the expected scale, he added.

There were challenges and doubts regarding private-sector defence production as the country took steps towards "Atmanirbharta", but the current government opened up the sector by changing policies and simplifying the processes, as it had full faith in their potential, said Singh.

"It is also resulting in good quality and better timelines, besides improvement in productivity and delivery. Our defence ecosystem has improved a lot. The way scientific temperament and a technology-driven approach developed in the private defence sector is laudable," he said.

The private sector was now ahead of the public sector on research and development, said the minister, adding that India was moving fast to become a major arms exporter.

A shortage in ammunition supply was felt, but the government brought in self-reliance in the sector, he said, while lauding Solar group for its various defence production capacities, like Pinaka missiles and the Nagastra drone used in Operation Sindoor. The government's ambition was that India should become the global hub of ammunition production, Singh said.

"Wars are becoming very complex, and their intensity is also increasing. In such a scenario, the preparation should be on a war footing. The nature of war is changing very fast. New methods are coming forth that were never in traditional war," he said. "Wars are now not limited to borders, but their effects are felt directly by the public. Energy, trade, tariff, supply chains, technology, and information have become the new dimensions of conflict."

Given these changes, the country's alertness on the borders, weapons, hardware, and defence industrial manufacturing has increased, he emphasised.

Govt seeking dates as no merit in NSA case: Wangchuk's wife

NEW DELHI, PTI: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife, Gitanjali Angmo, has said his arrest reflects the country's state of democracy, where power is used to "illegally detain" people, and the case has "no merit" as the government is repeatedly seeking fresh dates in court.

Gitanjali J Angmo

Angmo said Wangchuk should already be out of prison, considering "procedural lapses" by authorities, saying it is an "open-and-shut case".

Angmo also said she was "a bit disappointed" that the detention had not faced stronger pushback. "We cannot afford to be silent," she said, calling for a collective and louder opposition to his arrest.

Wangchuk, a Magsaysay Award-winning climate activist and educator, was detained under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) on September 26, two days after protests demanding statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh left four people dead and 90 injured in the Union Territory.

Angmo said the grounds of detention used against Wangchuk "are stale" and some of them "rely on videos that are one and a half years old or one year old".

She said out of the five FIRs that have been relied upon, three don't name him. Among the two that name him, one dates back to August 2025, to which no notice was given or inquiry made, she said.

"The Solicitor General of India, who represents the Union (government), always keeps taking dates after dates, employing delay tactics, because I think they have realised that there is no merit in the case," she said.

However, she added, "I am told that compared to other cases, we still are getting dates which are quick enough".

SC: Reserved category candidates can secure general seats on merit

Says reservation roster can't be used as basis for selection

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court has said that the reservation roster can't be used as the basis for a selection process, as a reserve category candidate with higher cut-off marks must be adjusted against unreserved seats.

A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Satish Chandra Sharma held that the reservation roster is used only to define the number of vacant posts for future recruitment.

"Since the reservation register or roster defines the quota available for recruitment, it can be used to decide who deserves selection and who does not deserve selection on account of a concerned category quota being filled by more meritorious candidates in the category available for the concerned candidate," the bench said.

It highlighted a two-fold purpose of maintaining a reservation roster, firstly, to ascertain that at any given point in time, the number of employees in a cadre belonging to a particular category (SC, ST and OBC) does not exceed their lawful quota in the cadre. The second is to determine the number of posts in all the categories (UR, SC, ST and OBC) vacant for future recruitments.

HC oder set aside

Allowing an appeal by the Airport Authority of India (AAI), the court set aside the Kerala High Court's division bench 2020 judgment, in which it directed the appointment of respondent Sham Krishna B to the post of junior assistant (fire service).

The apex court, however, found that the HC failed to appreciate the fundamental fact that the reservation roster comes into the picture only after the selection process is over, and it is a list of employees of a cadre who are on the payroll of the organisation.

In the present case, the bench pointed out, no concession was extended to the reserve category candidates who have been appointed on their own merit against the posts meant for the general category candidates, as they have scored more marks than the general category candidates.

"Therefore, the appellant authority was justified in migrating the candidates belonging to the reserved category to the unreserved list based on their own merit, as they have scored higher marks than the general category candidates," Justice Sharma wrote in a 28-page judgment on J anuary 16.

Bagdogra-bound flight lands in Lucknow after bomb threat

LUCKNOW, PTI: An IndiGo Airlines flight en route from Delhi to West Bengal's Bagdogra made an emergency landing at the Lucknow airport on Sunday morning following a bomb threat, police said.

Bomb disposal squads, security agencies and airport authorities carried out a thorough security check of the flight carrying 222 passengers, including eight infants, besides two pilots and five crew members.

All passengers and crew were safely evacuated, officials said.

According to officials, Air Traffic Control (ATC) received information at around 8.46 am about a bomb threat on IndiGo flight 6E-6650. Acting on the alert and following prescribed security protocols, the aircraft was diverted and made a safe emergency landing at Lucknow Airport at 9.17 am.

As per a press statement issued by the Lucknow police commissionerate, after landing, the aircraft was immediately parked in an isolation bay.

During preliminary checks, a handwritten note on a tissue paper bearing the words "Plane mein bomb" (bomb in the plane) was found, police said.

Further investigation and necessary legal action are underway.

The law and order situation remains normal and under control, police said.

3 of 4 Indians say VIP culture increased last year: Survey

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A new survey shows that 77% of Indians — more than three-fourths — believe VIP culture increased in the last year, with eight in 10 people believing that the phenomenon was mostly witnessed in locations like places of worship, roads, and tollways.

The survey, conducted by LocalCircles on 54,000 people — 69% men and 31% women — across 333 districts in the country, showed that only 64% felt the same way in 2024.

The study revealed that 81% of those who commuted or travelled by road and tollways last year said they witnessed VIP culture, while 70% said they observed it at airports and on flights.

Over 19,320 respondents indicated they witnessed it in more than one place. Among them, 52% said they saw it in trains and stations.

As many as 83% of the respondents who travelled to religious places last year said they saw VIP culture, and 80% said they saw it at public and private events.

The respondents said they saw preferential treatment for those in power and their near-and-dear ones being the norm.

"From the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj to Ganpati Pandals in Mumbai and from government offices to hundreds of cases of VIP movement with convoys on Indian roads, social media is full of videos where citizens are reporting VIP culture," noted the report.

"High-profile private events like Lionel Messi's India tour in December also attracted criticism for how VIP access displaced ordinary fans, igniting discussions about elitism in major cultural events," it added.

A similar study in 2024 revealed that 46% of respondents found VIP culture; 14% believed it had, in fact, risen significantly in the previous three years.

In 2024, 91% of those who travelled by road attested to experiencing VIP culture, and 83% found government offices to be afflicted by it.

Techie dies as car plunges into water-filled pit in Greater Noida; negligence alleged

NOIDA, PTI: A 27-year-old software engineer died after his car went out of control and plunged into an over 20-feet-deep, water-filled pit in Sector 150 of Greater Noida amid fog, police said on Sunday.

While local residents staged protests alleging negligence and lack of safety measures at the accident-prone site, the police said an FIR has been lodged against two real estate developers in connection with the incident.

The deceased, identified as Yuvraj Mehta, was working as a software engineer in Gurugram. He was returning home from work when the accident occurred in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

According to police, information was received around 12.15 am that a car had fallen into a pit dug for the basement of an under-construction building near Sector 150.

A search operation was launched, and the body was recovered later on Saturday morning with the help of teams from the fire department, SDRF, NDRF and the police.

However, Moninder, a delivery agent who claimed to be an eyewitness, alleged that rescue efforts were delayed and said the techie could have been saved if timely action had been taken.

He told reporters that he reached the spot around 1.45 am and found rescue personnel hesitant to enter the water due to cold conditions and the presence of iron rods.

"I tied a rope around my waist and went into the water myself. I searched for the youth and his car for about 30 minutes," he claimed.

However, additional commissioner of police (Law and Order) denied negligence.

MISCELLANY

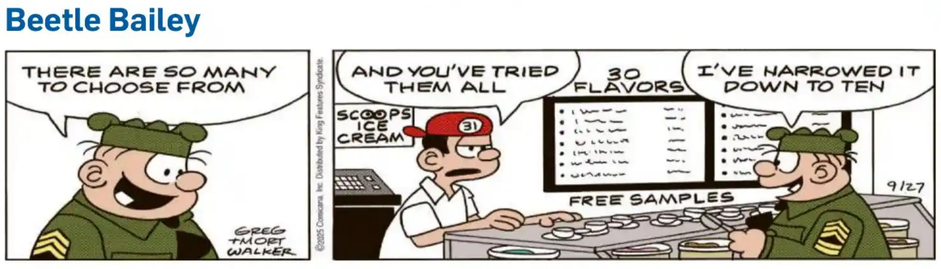
◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

I THINK SNORING GETS A BAD RAP
HOW SO?
IT TAKES SKILL AND PRACTICE..I THINK THERE SHOULD BE AN AWARD FOR IT!
10-10
...I THINK IT DEFINITELY WOULDN'T BE THE PEACE PRIZE...
SKNXX-X...

Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey



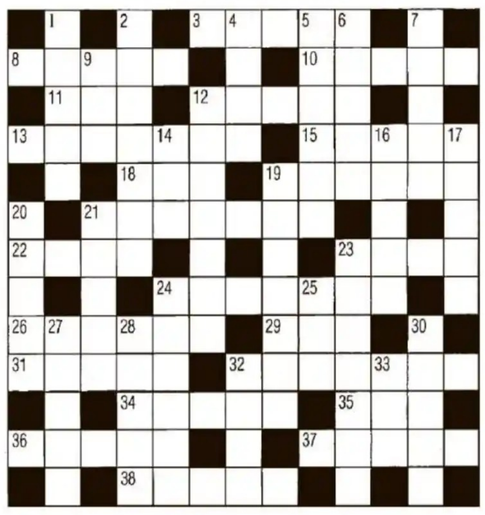
Peanuts

HEY, MANAGER, IT'S TOO HOT TO PLAY BALL TODAY!
STOP COMPLAINING! YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE OUT ON THE DESERT!
HAVE YOU LOOKED AT YOUR PITCHER'S MOUND LATELY?

Marvin

DAD SAYS RACCOONS DUMPED OUR GARBAGE CANS LAST NIGHT!
SO?
BITSY
HE SAYS IF YOU CAN'T STOP THEM HE'S GOING TO REPLACE YOU WITH A DOG WHO CAN!
BITSY

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12334



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
3 At the bar, it saves one standing or falling (5)
8 Being so spoils the fun a little bit (5)
10 A key group? (5)
11 If you want a drink, move fast! (3)
12 Not now consumed in different ways (5)
13 Do such classes prevent you becoming a square peg? (4,3)
15 Tear ahead to the city (5)
18 Timber well suited as a sleeper? (3)
19 The Italian 'modern miss' (6)
21 Town's source of white eggs (7)
22 In this way, shut wrongly (4)
23 Name for a bit of firm admonition (4)
24 Certain boys out to upset the routine ways (7)
26 Vessel with an ensign on? (6)
29 I again show anger (3)
31 Bits of wire in boxes (5)
32 Are rushed around when wounded (7)
34 Possibly a last book (5)
35 Sort of service for 51p? (3)
36 Like her mother, she's beautiful (5)
37 Sanguine sort of group (5)
38 Council convened by Dyson? (5)

DOWN
1 The man who came to dinner (5)
2 It's up to that very quiet lad to provide drinks (7)
4 The one with the shirt-like titfer? (4)
5 A king, one imagines, with no robe (6)
6 It's flaming shocking! (5)
7 A town on the tube (5)
9 A word of fierce reproof? (3)
12 Being a match for some men will ease things (7)
14 Naturally it can make things a sight worse (3)
16 Fruity footnote about a listener (5)
17 Relating to the birth of twins? (5)
19 Character given a novel farewell (2,5)
20 Rod's employees? (5)
21 Director of celestial conflicts, by George! (5)
23 Perfectly casually, goes round spilling ale (7)
24 Generally in the majority (6)
25 Arboreal mineral? (3)
27 Deadly German gruel concoction (5)
28 With good ears, they can be engaging (5)
30 At the station, top up with some Derv (5)
32 Special gas ring for pudding (4)
33 Ferdinand's little place? (3)

ACROSS
3 Picture puzzle (5)
8 Nun's outfit (5)
10 Quick, nimble (5)
11 Weapon (3)
12 Prisons (5)
13 Speaker's platform (7)
15 Fertile spot (5)
18 Short sleep (3)
19 Royal residence (6)
21 Lesser deity (7)
22 Barbers cut this (4)
23 Chair (4)
24 Flow windingly (7)
26 Restaurant worker (6)
29 Can (3)
31 Iron alloy (5)
32 Mythical winged horse (7)
34 Change (5)
35 Toddler (3)
36 Lariat (5)
37 Chambermaid's workplace (5)
38 Water jugs (5)

DOWN
1 Truck (5)
2 Wine merchant (7)
4 Dutch cheese (4)
5 Remove cargo from (6)
6 Rope-making fibre (5)
7 Of the eye (5)
9 Clippie's vehicle (3)
12 Planet (7)
14 Tup (3)
16 One who puts money away (5)
17 Cults (5)
19 Indicator (7)
20 Melts (5)
21 Southern states of the US (5)
23 Legislator, statesman (7)
24 Sweet, ripe (6)
25 Use a spade (3)
27 Book of maps (5)
28 To rib (5)
30 External (5)
32 Lord (4)
33 Chronic drunkard (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 2663

ACROSS: 1 On fire, 4 Feel-good, 9 Enrich, 10 Top brass, 12 Overleaf, 13 Reveal, 15 Site, 16 Take it easy, 19 Hard-earned, 20 Stud, 23 Sister, 25 Barbaric, 27 Eruption, 28 Wizard, 29 Naked eye, 30 Method.

DOWN: 1 Onerous, 2 Fire-eater, 3 Recall, 5 Eros, 6 Libretto, 7 Ovate, 8 Display, 11 Cavalry, 14 Several, 17 Aftermath, 18 Deserted, 19 Has-been, 21 Decided, 22 Oblige, 24 Skunk, 26 Go by.

◆SU-DO-KU-6807◆

1					7		5	8
4	3		1					6
		6	9			3		
				6			4	2
		2				1		
3	4			1				
		5			6	9		
6					1		7	4
	9		3					5

medium

SOLUTION TO 6806

4	7	8	3	1	9	2	6	5
3	6	1	5	2	7	4	8	9
9	5	2	4	8	6	3	1	7
5	4	6	7	9	3	8	2	1
7	8	3	1	6	2	9	5	4
2	1	9	8	4	5	7	3	6
6	9	4	2	3	1	5	7	8
1	2	5	9	7	8	6	4	3
8	3	7	6	5	4	1	9	2

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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N1	N1	G2	S1	O1	P3	Y4	4th Letter Triple	RACK 1
A1	E1	C3	P3	K5	R1	P3		RACK 2
P3	C3	P3	E1	I1	L1	R1	Double Word Score	RACK 3
O1	N1	R1	E1	I1	G2	D2		RACK 4

PAR SCORE 145-155
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

A1	C3	T1	O1	R1	S1		RACK 1 =	16
S1	L1	U1	S1	H4	E1	D2	RACK 2 =	61
Q10	U1	A1	H4	O1	G2		RACK 3 =	57
K5	E1	L1	O1	I1	D2		RACK 4 =	22
G2	R1	I1	N1	N1	E1	D2	RACK 5 =	59

PAR SCORE 140-150 JUDD'S TOTAL 215

JUMBLE

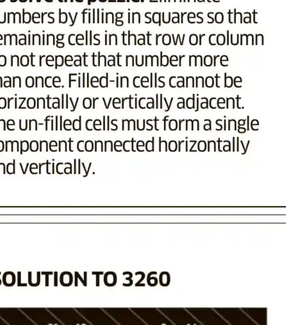
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TPYUT

NMYEO

ANSDRT

RELENK


THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek
This will be an engineering marvel.
Hudson River Vehicular Tunnel
Marvel? It will be an engineering miracle.
It won't be easy. That's for sure.
7/10
SAYING IT WOULD BE HARD TO BUILD A TUNNEL BENEATH THE HUDSON RIVER WAS AN ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: TRACT CRANK PULLEY CASHEW
Answer: Many people love quartz, and the reason is — CRYSTAL CLEAR

HITORI-3261

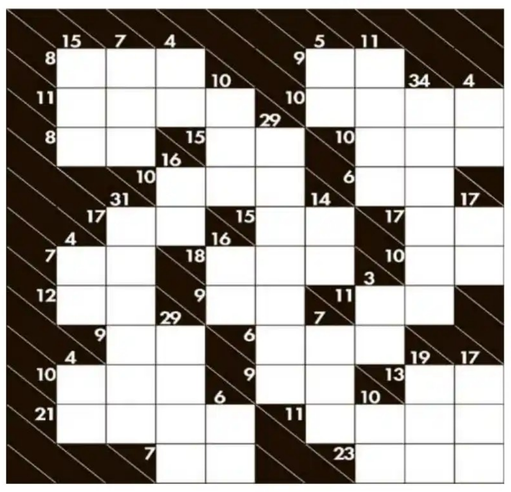
6	1	1	7	2	4	8	8
2	7	3	8	8	8	6	4
6	3	8	4	7	6	5	8
7	8	2	5	8	3	8	6
5	8	6	8	4	2	1	2
8	8	7	2	5	1	4	8
4	6	8	8	1	7	6	5
1	1	4	2	6	2	8	3

SOLUTION TO 3260

4	7	■	1	2	6	5	■
■	3	8	■	6	1	■	2
5	■	6	2	1	■	4	3
6	4	3	5	■	2	8	■
■	2	5	■	4	■	6	8
3	6	1	7	5	4	2	■
1	■	4	■	8	■	3	7
■	8	2	6	■	5	1	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3261



SOLUTION TO 3260

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

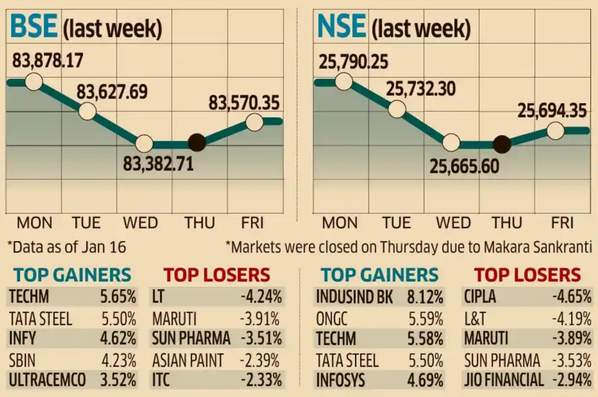
SU DO KU X - 3801

■				4		2	7	■
2	■		7				■	
		1	9			■		
			■		■			6
	7			6				
		9	■		■	4	2	
		8		1	5	■		
	■					6	■	
■				8		9	3	■

SOLUTION TO 3800

9	1	3	6	4	7	2	5	8
6	2	8	5	3	9	1	7	4
5	7	4	2	1	8	3	9	6
8	6	1	7	2	5	9	4	3
3	4	9	8	6	1	5	2	7
2	5	7	4	9	3	6	8	1
7	3	2	1	5	4	8	6	9
4	9	5	3	8	6	7	1	2
1	8	6	9	7	2	4	3	5

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.



*Data as of Jan 16 *Markets were closed on Thursday due to Makara Sankranti

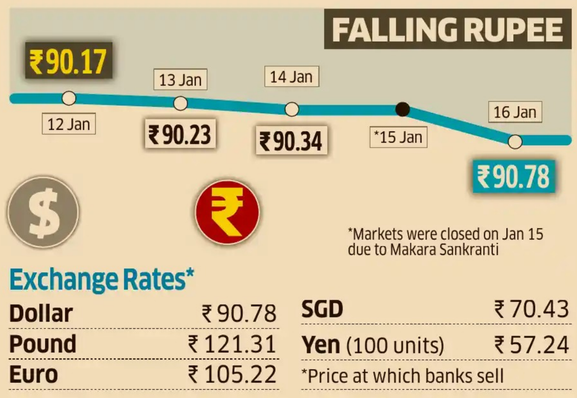
TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
TECHM	5.65%	LT	-4.24%
TATA STEEL	5.50%	MARUTI	-3.91%
INFY	4.62%	SUN PHARMA	-3.51%
SBIN	4.23%	ASIAN PAINT	-2.39%
ULTRACEMCO	3.52%	ITC	-2.33%

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
INDUSIND BK	8.12%	CIPLA	-4.65%
ONGC	5.59%	L&T	-4.19%
TECHM	5.58%	MARUTI	-3.89%
TATA STEEL	5.50%	SUN PHARMA	-3.53%
INFOSYS	4.69%	JIO FINANCIAL	-2.94%

Sensex (52-week)
Jan 16, 2025: 77,042.82 | Jan 16, 2026: 83,570.35 | 8.47%

Nifty (52-week)
Jan 16, 2025: 23,311.80 | Jan 16, 2026: 25,694.35 | 10.22%

10-year Bond yield 6.67%



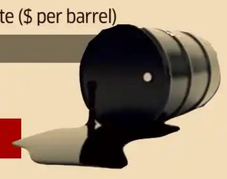
*Markets were closed on Jan 15 due to Makara Sankranti

Exchange Rates*

Dollar	₹ 90.78	SGD	₹ 70.43
Pound	₹ 121.31	Yen (100 units)	₹ 57.24
Euro	₹ 105.22		

*Price at which banks sell

Crude Oil Rate ($ per barrel)
BRENT CRUDE
$64.13*
0.58%
*Rate as of Jan 16



Bengaluru fuel pump price*
(Retail)
Petrol* ₹102.96 ₹0.04%
Diesel* ₹90.99 ₹0.00%
*Rates as of Jan 18 #Rate change compared with yesterday

Commodity watch

COFFEE

Category	Rate (Rs per 50 kg)*
Arabica Parchment	₹ 25500 - 26000
Arabica Cherry	₹ 13100 - 14700
Robusta Parchment	₹ 16000 - 16500
Robusta Cherry	₹ 9600 - 10400

*Rates as on Jan 14

Other Commodities
Silkworm cocoon (Rs per kg)*

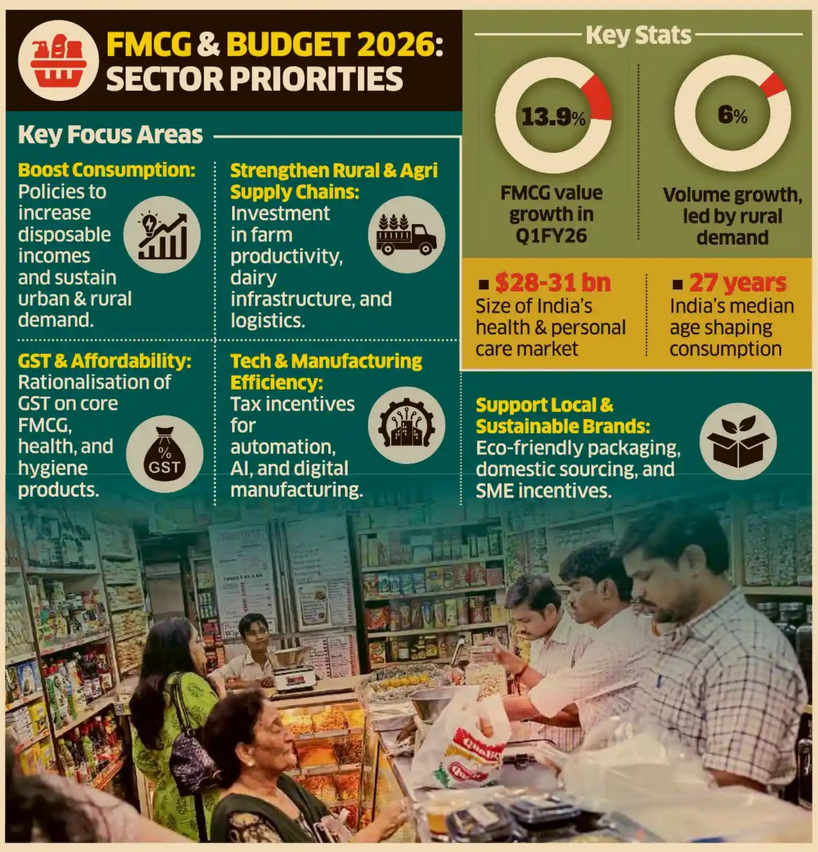
Bivoltine (BV)	₹ 765
Cross Breed (CB)	₹ 678

*Average rates as on Jan 16

FMCG sector seeks to ride consumption wave

Encouraged by last year's income tax relief, firms eye deeper rural demand, support for long-term growth

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE
BENGALURU, DHNS


FMCG & BUDGET 2026: SECTOR PRIORITIES
Key Focus Areas
Boost Consumption: Policies to increase disposable incomes and sustain urban & rural demand.
Strengthen Rural & Agri Supply Chains: Investment in farm productivity, dairy infrastructure, and logistics.
GST & Affordability: Rationalisation of GST on core FMCG, health, and hygiene products.
Tech & Manufacturing Efficiency: Tax incentives for automation, AI, and digital manufacturing.
Support Local & Sustainable Brands: Eco-friendly packaging, domestic sourcing, and SME incentives.
Key Stats
13.9%
FMCG value growth in Q1FY26
6%
Volume growth, led by rural demand
$28-31 bn
Size of India's health & personal care market
27 years
India's median age shaping consumption

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is a reflection of economic health. Closely linked to consumption, it acts as a barometer of personal income levels and overall economic wellbeing. What is consumed follows what is earned, and a thriving FMCG industry reinforces this critical link.

The Union Budget 2025-26 provided a strong impetus to consumer spending, particularly benefiting the FMCG sector through income tax relief that boosted disposable incomes, along with sustained emphasis on rural development. As the presentation of the Union Budget 2026-27 nears, the sector, encouraged by last year's measures, expects the momentum to continue, with sharper focus on strengthening infrastructure and supply-chains, improving farm productivity, and investing in technology to further stimulate consumption.

According to the Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), the FMCG industry is projected to maintain healthy growth, supported by rising disposable incomes, a young consumer base, increasing brand awareness, and favourable government policies. "Household FMCG spending rose 8% to Rs 17,792 crore by April 2025, and is expected to rise further by year-end, driven by staples as well as non-staples. India's vast middle-class population, and its median age of just 27, are shaping consumption trends," the IBEF notes, adding that rising aspirations and financial inclusion are fuelling demand.

The sector has also demonstrated resilience, with companies focusing on efficient supply-chain management, sharper consumer insights, and digital-first communication strategies.

According to NielsenIQ, India's FMCG market grew 13.9% in value and 6% in volume in Q1FY26, led by rural demand, smaller pack sizes, and the expansion of ecommerce. With growth drivers in place, the industry continues to seek steady policy support.

"Reforms in GST and other taxation have played a positive role in supporting consumption patterns over the past year. Boosting consumption remains an important ask from the FMCG sector. While urban demand is showing signs of recovery, rural consumption, though resilient, requires continued policy support, especially in the face of monsoon risks and inflationary pressures," says Akshali Shah, Executive Director, Parag Milk Foods.

"Ahead of Budget 2026, a continued focus on the dairy and agriculture sector, particularly on strengthening infrastructure, improving farm productivity, and expanding milk collection, can help the sector become more efficient and globally competitive," she adds.

Echoing this view, Subir Ghosh, Managing Director of Annapurna Group, says, "As the Union Budget approaches, the FMCG and food processing sector looks forward to policy continuity that strengthens India's consumption-driven growth while reinforcing the agricultural value-chain. With rising costs and evolving consumer expectations, the industry hopes the Budget will focus on easing operational pressures and enabling sustainable, long-term growth."

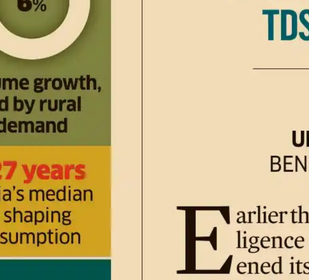
Agro-based FMCG growth has a direct impact on farmer livelihoods and the rural economy. Investments in modern processing technology, organised supply-chains, and improved farm practices can reduce wastage, support farmers, and enhance the global competitiveness of Indian agro and dairy products.

"Government support to help farmers improve production acreage and enhance output per hectare would be especially impactful, particularly for agri-linked sectors such as coffee," says Praveen Jaipuriar, CEO of CCL Products (India) Ltd. "Measures that strengthen farm productivity and resilience support farmer incomes and contribute to supply stability and long-term growth across the FMCG value chain." He adds that greater focus on free trade agreements can help Indian manufacturers expand globally.

The health and personal care segment, valued at $28-31 billion, continues to be driven by urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and awareness. "A rationalisation of GST on core FMCG products, especially health, hygiene and nutrition-led offerings, would ease inflationary pressures and improve affordability," says Chirag Pan, CEO and MD of Pan Health.

Technology adoption is another key expectation. "As digital and AI-led capabilities become central to manufacturing efficiency and agile supply-chains, targeted tax incentives for technology adoption can accelerate productivity and long-term competitiveness," says Dheeraj Arora, CEO and MD, Hygienic Research Institute Pvt Ltd.

Swagatika Das, CEO and Co-founder of Nat Habit, expects Budget 2026 to strengthen Indian brands rooted in local strengths. "Make in India should go beyond manufacturing to include Ayurveda-based products, responsible packaging, and stronger retail ecosystems."



For food and beverage companies, the Budget is also an opportunity to level the playing field. "Targeted incentives for small and mid-sized beverage manufacturers and support for distribution infrastructure can help us scale deeper into smaller markets," says Sathya Shankar, Managing Director of House of Bindu.

Indian bottlers remain optimistic. "With continued emphasis on industrial corridors, ease-of-doing-business reforms, GST rationalisation, and incentives for sustainable packaging, the beverage industry can drive India's next phase of inclusive growth," concludes Paritosh Ladhani, Joint Managing Director, SLMG Beverages.

Crypto industry for balanced regulatory environment

VDA sector expects more clarity in rules, TDS reduction

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Earlier this month, Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) - India tightened its compliance norms and released the updated AML (Anti-Money Laundering) & CFT (Countering the Financing of Terrorism) Guidelines for entities providing services related to Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) such as cryptocurrency. Though it is seen as a significant step, the VDA sector expects more clarity in rules and seeks a balanced regulatory environment in the upcoming Budget 2026.

CoinDCX Co-Founder Sumit Gupta says the VDA sector is naturally looking for measured relief, especially since it has been four years since the current taxation framework was introduced.

In the 2022 Budget, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an additional 1% TDS on payment made for the transfer of VDAs. Also, in case of gifts in the form of virtual assets, the same will be taxed in the hands of the recipient. She also announced a 30% tax on any income from the transfer of any VDA, which includes cryptocurrencies to non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Since then, there was no significant announcement for the cryptocurrency industry in the subsequent budgets.

"The decisions taken now can meaningfully accelerate innovation and help India emerge as a global Web3 & VDA leader. The way forward lies in pragmatic reforms that bring users back to compliant platforms while strengthening compliance. A critical first step is ensuring clarity in rules and mandating that all crypto exchanges uniformly implement TDS provisions, which will improve compliance and enhance citizen protection against questionable, non-compliant operators through improved adherence to regulations," Gupta says.

Also, the crypto industry has been demanding to reduce TDS from 1% to 0.01% as the current rate leading many investors and traders to turn towards foreign exchanges.

"Reducing TDS from 1% to 0.01% would retain monitoring, while removing the primary incentive for offshore migration, encouraging users to return to Indian platforms and restoring transaction visibility under government oversight. Aligning the 30% capital gains tax with income tax slabs, along with allowing loss offsetting and standard business deductions for Web3 ventures, would help create a stable, transparent, and future-ready ecosystem that supports responsible innovation in India," he adds.

Binance Head of APAC SB Seker says the forthcoming Budget presents an opportunity to strengthen the VDA ecosystem through measured regulatory and tax refinements that protect users, maintain financial stability, and support responsible market development.

"From a tax perspective, a pragmatic framework focused on capital gains realised, with provisions for limited loss setoff and removal on transaction-level levies in favour of net-revenue generating corporate taxes instead, can improve fairness for retail participants and indicate to them that India has moved past the tax-and-deter regime towards a fuller license-and-supervise one. Clear, consistent operating standards for VDA platforms, aligned with India's AML/KYC and investor protection priorities, will encourage responsible capital investment, create skilled jobs, and build domestic capabilities," Seker adds.

Recent estimates suggest that Indians contributed close to Rs 5 lakh crore in trade volume on offshore exchanges between October 2024 and October 2025, highlighting how quickly trading activity and value can migrate outside the country, Delta Exchange CEO and Co-Founder Pankaj Balani says.

He adds that when platforms sit beyond Indian jurisdiction, oversight weakens, consumer grievance redressal becomes limited, and the economic value created by Indian users disproportionately flows overseas. "We lose the jobs that this industry creates and the economic value it creates. More importantly, relying on non-accountable foreign platforms for critical financial infrastructure introduces systemic risk, especially during periods of geopolitical or market stress," Balani says, adding that in this Budget, they hope to see a balanced regulatory framework that enables responsible innovation while firmly enforcing compliance.

"That means acting decisively against entities offering unauthorised services, and clearly differentiating between compliant Indian platforms and non-compliant offshore operators through policy support and fair, growth-oriented incentives for domestic players... If India can build and retain its own digital asset champions, we will not only strengthen consumer protection and tax compliance, but also ensure that the next phase of financial innovation is built in India, for India," he concludes.

Market participants want equity tax relief ahead of Budget

NEW DELHI, PTI: Market participants have urged the government to ease capital market taxation, including a higher exemption limit on long-term capital gains, ahead of the Union Budget for 2026-27.

They also suggested that the government avoid further increases in transaction taxes.

The Union Budget will be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1.

Market stakeholders also demanded enhancement of the tax-free exemption limit on long-term capital gains (LTCG) from equity investments to provide greater relief to retail and long-term investors.

In its budget wishlist, JM Financial Services recommended that the government should raise the tax-free exemption limit for equity LTCG from Rs 1.25 lakh to Rs 2 lakh.

The firm also sought to standardise the definition of "long term" to 12 months across all asset classes, including equity, debt, gold and real estate, to reduce complexity and improve tax clarity.

Additionally, it called for allowing capital losses to be set off against income under other heads.

Market participants have also cautioned against any further increase in transaction-related taxes.

Dhiraj Relli, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of HDFC Securities, said stakeholders have proposed keeping the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) on cash equity trades lower than that on derivatives to encourage long-term investing over speculative trading.

He also suggested taxing only the profit component of share buybacks and aligning dividend tax rates for domestic investors with those applicable to non-resident Indians (NRIs).

Tejas Khoday, Chief Executive Officer of FYERS, said the government should refrain from raising STT any further.

He added that reducing both long-term and short-term capital gains tax to 10% would significantly boost retail investor participation.

Khoday also expressed hope that import duties on gold and silver are not increased further, as these assets remain important hedging instruments against equity market volatility and rupee depreciation.

Meanwhile, the NSE and BSE will conduct live trading on Sunday, February 1, when the Union Budget is presented.

BUDGET 2026

Realtors demand tax incentives to boost affordable housing

MAHESH KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Ahead of the Union Budget 2026, the real estate sector has sought tax reliefs and policy changes to make housing affordable for new-age urban citizens and the growing middle-class. As the country progresses towards its goal of becoming the third-largest economy in the world, housing must be treated as a national economic priority, say real estate developers.

"Without adequate, accessible housing, new-age urban citizens and the growing middle-class will face increasing pressure directly impacting productivity and economic growth. Affordable and mid-market housing, therefore, cannot be overlooked," says Murali Malayappan, Chairman & Managing Director, Shriram Properties Limited.

The affordable housing cap should be increased from Rs 45 lakh to Rs 60-70 lakh to reflect today's costs and buyer profiles, he adds.

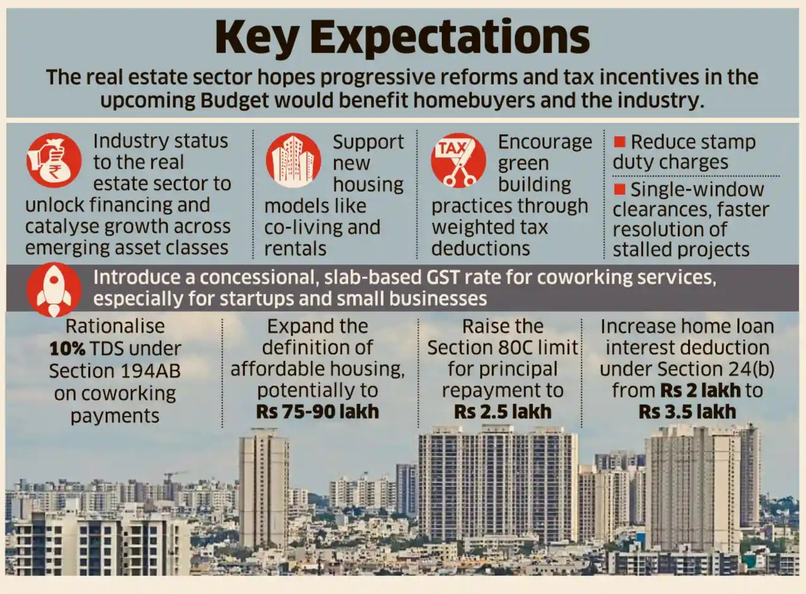
Satya Prakash Gupta, CFO, Concorde favours the cap to be increased to Rs 90 lakh. He adds that home loan interest deduction under Section 24(b) should be increased from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3-5 lakh, and the Section 80C limit for principal repayment be raised to Rs 2.5 lakh.

India faces an estimated urban housing shortage of over 10 million units, with a majority of the gap concentrated in the economically weaker and lower-income segments. Addressing this deficit requires renewed policy thrust to improve home-loan affordability for first-time buyers, says Anuj Sharma, COO, India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation.

"Strengthening interest-linked incentives for these households would directly support demand, particularly in Tier II and Tier III cities where aspirations remain strong but affordability is under pressure," he says.

The industry also wants Section 80EEA reinstated to give first-time buyers an extra Rs 1.5 lakh interest deduction.

Priyanka Raju, Director, Kalyani Developers, says, "The upcoming Union Budget has an important role to play in bridging the gap between urban aspirations and financial realities. With property prices and home loan rates


Key Expectations
The real estate sector hopes progressive reforms and tax incentives in the upcoming Budget would benefit homebuyers and the industry.
Industry status to the real estate sector to unlock financing and catalyse growth across emerging asset classes
Support new housing models like co-living and rentals
Encourage green building practices through weighted tax deductions
Reduce stamp duty charges
Single-window clearances, faster resolution of stalled projects
Introduce a concessional, slab-based GST rate for coworking services, especially for startups and small businesses
Rationalise 10% TDS under Section 194AB on coworking payments
Expand the definition of affordable housing, potentially to Rs 75-90 lakh
Raise the Section 80C limit for principal repayment to Rs 2.5 lakh
Increase home loan interest deduction under Section 24(b) from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3.5 lakh

rising, a meaningful enhancement in tax relief on interest and principal repayments would go a long way in supporting end-users."

"The real estate sector is hopeful that the government would consider its long-standing demands of rationalising of GST on construction contracts from the current 18% to 12% or lower. This will provide immediate relief to both homebuyers and developers alike," says Pradyumna Krishnakumar, Executive Director & Interim Chief Financial Officer, Brigade Enterprises Limited.

The industry has also demanded easing project-level financing, enabling structured private credit, and regulatory frameworks for alternative investment platforms. "These measures can unlock long-term capital, support office expansion beyond core metros, and strengthen real estate's role in employment and urban growth," says Sudarshan Lodha, Co-founder & CEO, Strata.

Sunil Pareek, Executive Director, Assetz wants the government to present a momentum budget, and not a stimulus budget. "If cities work better, housing markets will follow. The centre of gravity of India's growth has decisively shifted to its cities. Strong signals on urban infrastructure, jobs and capital confidence will sustain housing demand far more effectively than isolated housing," he says.

Abdulkader Bengali, MD, Hansgrohe India, says the growing middle-class is increasingly seeking luxury residential and hospitality experiences — spaces that are not only premium and well-designed, but also efficient and sustainable, reflecting evolving lifestyles and global exposure. "This shift calls for policy frameworks that strengthen infrastructure, urban planning, and housing ecosystems, ensuring access to high-quality living, while maintaining affordability and long-term value. Encouraging responsible construction practices, skill development, and quality-led execution can elevate standards across both luxury residential and hospitality segments," he adds.

Ramani Sastri, Chairman & MD, Sterling Developers Pvt Ltd has asked the government to raise the deduction limit for interest payment on home loans from the existing Rs 2 lakh a year, to Rs 5 lakh, which will add momentum to the housing sector. "This would not only drive growth in the real estate sector, but also stimulate demand around 250 ancillary industries, thereby boosting job creation across sectors," he says.

India's workforce is steadily moving towards hybrid models, increasingly relying on shared spaces. Making construction more viable will encourage the creation of modern, well-designed work environments which will ensure that talent across the country has access to world-class infrastructure to innovate, collaborate, and grow, says Manas Mehrotra, Founder, 315Work Avenue.

TOP PICKS

The data is sourced from Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited

360 One
(ID: 360ONE)
BUY
Upside +17%**
Last close ₹1,198
Target: ₹1,400*

Canara HSBC Life
(ID: CANHLIFE)
BUY
Upside +28%**
Last close ₹141
Target: ₹180*

Infosys
(ID: INFY)
BUY
Upside +30%**
Last close ₹1,690
Target: ₹2,200*

JSW Energy
(ID: JSWENERGY)
BUY
Upside +33%**
Last close ₹493
Target: ₹657*

Lemon Tree
(ID: LEMONTREE)
BUY
Upside +41%**
Last close ₹142
Target: ₹200*

* Target price has been calculated on the basis of fundamentals ** Upside refers to more value stock is expected to generate than its current price

Investment opportunities in 2026

The year 2025 was a mixed year for investors with equity, debt, and gold giving differential returns. Risk-averse investors who were depending on interest income watched banks slashing interest rates on fixed deposits. Investors in equity had a tepid year. But how will 2026 pan out for investors? Let us look at the different asset classes and what the year holds for you.

Equity as an asset class

The Indian equity markets were a mixed bag with the Sensex giving a return of 9.50% during the calendar year, having gone up from 80,000 and ending the year around 85,000 levels. The NIFTY had a slightly better year having given a return of 11%. Investors in small caps had a bad year with NIFTY small cap index declining by 8%. The mutual fund industry did reasonably well during the year and the Assets Under Management (AUM) went up from Rs 67 lakh crore to Rs 81 lakh crore, growing by 21%. It was a great year for corporates which raised a record Rs 1.75 lakh crore through initial public offerings during the year. For many promoters IPOs proved to be the exit routes funded by retail investors. Investors focusing on achieving financial goals should continue to invest in equity through SIPs in mutual funds.

Debt as an asset class

It was a decent year for debt mutual funds with most of them delivering returns better than bank FDs thanks to the fall in interest rates. There is an inverse relationship between interest rates and bond prices. The yields on 10-year G-sec have been hovering around 6.50%. Investors who find it difficult to understand the dynamics of interest rates and bond prices can simply invest in dynamic bond funds and let the fund manager do the allocation across duration. With interest rates on deposits coming down due to a series of repo rate cuts by RBI totaling to 1.25% during the year, investors, mainly the senior citizens, can continue to park their savings in small saving schemes like Senior Citizen Savings Scheme which offer a tenure of 5 years offering 8.20%. The saving grace is that the government has not reduced interest rates on small saving schemes offering an arbitrage opportunity for bank depositors.

VASANT G HEGDE
CFA AND FORMER BANKER

Gold & silver as asset classes

The conventional advice given by experts that investors should allocate a maximum of 10% to 15% to gold, and now silver in their portfolio was challenged and tested as both the metals had a stellar year with gold climbing to around $4,420 per troy ounce, from $2,640 at the beginning of the year- giving a return of 68% during the year. The central banks across the world continued to accumulate gold and go on an aggressive buying spree and their appetite did not seem to have declined during the year.

Silver did much better than gold and had an outstanding year, having gone up from $30 per ounce to $70 at the end of the year giving a return of 130% driven by demand from the industrial side and supported by growth in the solar, electric vehicle, and data centre sectors. Both precious metals will continue to benefit in the new year on rate cut hopes and escalating geopolitical tensions. Investors should stick to asset allocation and focus on their goals rather than try to rejig their portfolio and allocate more to these precious metals.

Bitcoin as an investment option

Bitcoin (BTC) had a disappointing year with prices moving up from $92,000 in January to $1,21,000 before crashing in October and is currently trading at $89,000. The recent accumulation by institutions, comprising corporate purchases totaling billions, was the primary driver of renewed interest in BTC as a store of value and with the supply being limited, it should do well during 2026 too. One note of caution though for investors. Unlike equity where you can know the intrinsic price of a stock by studying various ratios and where you can understand the underlying business of a company, it is difficult to find out the intrinsic price of a BTC and you can never know whether at the current price bitcoins are undervalued or overvalued.

In the end, it always pays to have a diversified portfolio comprising all asset classes.

Mcap of top-3 most valued firms jumps by Rs 75,855 crore

NEW DELHI, PTI: The combined market valuation of three of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 75,855.43 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with SBI and Infosys emerging as the biggest gainers, in an otherwise sluggish trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex dipped 5.89 points, and the NSE Nifty went up by 11.05 points. While ICICI Bank, SBI and Infosys were the gainers, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Larsen & Toubro faced a combined erosion of Rs 75,549.89 crore from their valuation.

The combined erosion of these seven firms was less than the total m-cap addition of Rs 75,855.43 crore of the three companies: ICICI Bank, State Bank of India and Infosys.

SBI's market valuation jumped Rs 39,045.51 crore to Rs 9,62,107.27 crore, becoming the biggest gainer. The mcap of Infosys surged Rs 31,014.59 crore to Rs 7,01,889.59 crore.

ICICI Bank added Rs 5,795.33 crore taking its valuation to Rs 10,09,470.28 crore. However, the mcap of Reliance Industries tumbled Rs 23,952.48 crore to Rs 19,72,493.21 crore. The market valuation of Larsen & Toubro dropped by Rs 23,501.8 crore to Rs 5,30,410.23 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation eroded by Rs 11,615.35 crore to Rs 14,32,534.91 crore and that of Bharti Airtel tanked Rs 6,443.38 crore to Rs 11,49,544.43 crore.

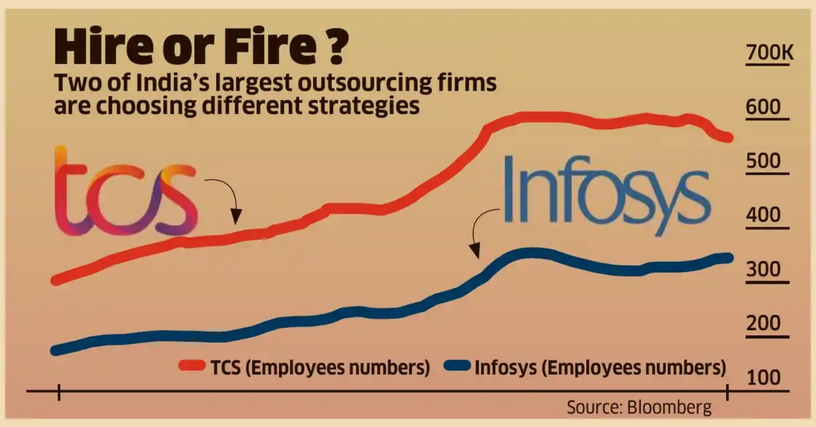
The mcap of Bajaj Finance declined by Rs 6,253.59 crore to Rs 5,91,447.16 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever diminished by Rs 3,312.93 crore to Rs 5,54,421.30 crore. The valuation of TCS dipped by Rs 470.36 crore to Rs 11,60,212.12 crore.

Reliance remained the most-valued domestic firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, SBI, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Larsen & Toubro.

Is the worst over for Indian outsourcing firms?

As some engineers become more productive using AI platforms like Claude Code, others will become obsolete

ANDY MUKHERJEE
BLOOMBERG OPINION



The pall of gloom around India's outsourcing industry, a $200 billion-plus exporting powerhouse, was lifted overnight by Infosys Ltd. After the company raised its full-year sales forecast, investors took optimistic commentary from management as a sign that large client orders are coming back. The stock, which also trades in New York, surged more than 10%. But what if the celebrations are a tad premature?

Both Bengaluru-based Infosys and its larger rival, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., are facing near-term pressure on profits. TCS reported a 14% decline in net income, missing analysts' estimates. Infosys registered a 2.2% drop. Last quarter's turbulence can be chalked up to the impact of India's new labor codes — employers have been forced to bump up gratuity and other compensation liabilities. The more important question on investors' mind is about the long-term viability of the sector itself.

Outsourcing companies employ a hybrid model: engineers sent to clients' offices and factories around the world coordinate with large teams of coders back in India. In the US, the largest market, the Trump administration's overhaul of the H-1B work visa program, which now comes with a steep $100,000 fee for new entrants, will raise costs.

At the same time, large orders for enterprise software that have put as many as 6 million coders on the path to middle-class livelihoods are drying up. Some of it is because of the global trade war. Clients are reluctant to invest in technology amid heightened uncertainty. More of the spending is going into so-called agentic AI — algorithms that make decisions and take action. According to TCS, its AI services revenue swelled in the September-December quarter to $1.8 billion, annualised. "We remain steadfast in our ambition to become the world's largest AI-led technology services company," Chief Executive Officer K. Krithivasan said after the results.

The ambition may be legitimate, but what if the street is telling the CEO that he doesn't need 582,000 employees to pull it off?

The outsourcing industry hired aggressively during the pandemic. With face-to-face commercial transactions forced to go online, there was a rush of digitisation projects across industries. But just as demand for software services was returning to normal, generative artificial intelligence appeared on the scene. When ChatGPT made its splashy entrance in late 2022, the consensus prediction was that TCS, Asia's largest outsourcing firm, would clock about $37 billion in revenue for the financial year ending in March 2026. With less than three months left, the estimate has dropped to $29 billion. A similar story has played out for Infosys.

Whether clients are really able to extract outsize productivity gains from AI is open to debate. But the impact of the new technology on outsourcing firms is more imminent. As some talented engineers become many times more productive using AI platforms like Claude Code, most other programmers will become obsolete. What to do with the redundant workforce may become a challenge, especially since the services exporters' track record of boosting employee productivity hasn't been all that great.

Over the past decade, India's top five outsourcing companies have managed to raise labour productivity by less than 2% annually because of their squeamishness to put more fixed capital behind human effort: The average value added by an employee has risen to roughly $40,000 a year, from $34,000 in 2015. The modest gains are going to labour, although not at the entry level where salaries have been stagnant. Profit per worker, in my calculations, has been practically unchanged in dollar terms.

The only way global investors will fall in love again with the outsourcing business is when it can demonstrably extract more productivity per employee. In an AI-dominated technology environment, that might involve more aggressive investment, or bigger reductions in workforce than these companies have delivered so far. (TCS has pruned its headcount by a little more than 5% since June 2023.)

Slimming down will be tricky. Software services have compensated for the absence of job creation by a stunted industrial sector. Politicians are still wooing these employers with free land, hoping they wil continue to create elusive white-collar positions.

The optimistic note struck by Infosys's forecast may have momentarily dispelled some of the despondency. But with New Delhi's broader economic relationship with Washington at its lowest point in decades, immigration policies in the biggest overseas market could turn yet more unfavorable. Nor is the tweak in India's labour code a one-time drag — some of the cost pressure will endure. Add the challenge to coders from cheap AI subscriptions, and outsourcing as a business is still in search of long-term viability.

WEEK AHEAD

Markets to tread cautiously as trade deal with US delayed

Last week, markets ended on a flat note as lacklustre trading kept price action subdued

SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA

This week, Indian equities are expected to trade in a range-bound manner, with intermittent volatility as there is continued focus on US tariff-related headlines and global geopolitical developments. Stock-specific action would remain prominent amid ongoing Q3 earnings announcements.

Overall, sentiment is likely to stay cautious due to sustained FII outflows and lingering uncertainty surrounding the India–US trade deal, while investors also await the US Supreme Court's potential ruling on the legality of tariffs imposed by the Trump administration. Key macro-economic data due this week includes US and China's Quarter-on-Quarter gross domestic product (GDP), US retail inflation (Consumer Price Inflation), Bank of Japan's interest rate decision, US and India's manufacturing and services PMI amongst others.

Last week, markets ended on a flat note as lacklustre trading kept price action subdued. Nifty50 closed marginally higher by 19 points at 25,694 (+0.1%). Nifty Midcap100 and Smallcap100 indices gained +0.1% and +0.4% respectively. Sectorally, Nifty PSU Bank index was the top gainer, rising 4.7%, followed by Metals which rose 4.4% during the week amid continued buying momentum.

Meanwhile, Nifty Realty and Pharma indices witnessed selling pressure, declining -2.4% each. Indian equities faced volatility, following latest comments from the US President on imposing an additional 25% tariff on key trading partners of Iran. Further, investor sentiments were dampened by intensifying FII selling, with cumulative outflows for January (till 15th Jan), crossing Rs 21,500 crore.

In a sectoral update, Cement demand has continued its healthy momentum in January 2026, with industry volumes growing at an estimated 7–8% year-on-year, while key companies saw even faster growth of around 10%. This comes after a relatively weak phase in 2025, which had pressured prices—especially in the South and East. The prices, which softened in October–November 2025, are now showing signs of recovery, with recent hikes of Rs 5–15 per bag in the trade segment and Rs 10–15 per bag in the non-trade segment being largely accepted across regions. Given the current strong demand momentum, busy construction period of January-June, and underperformance of cement stocks in the last one year, we believe that cement stocks are poised for a near-term uptick.

On the earnings front, major IT companies reported better than expected Q3 results. TCS earnings were broadly in line, with steady deal momentum supporting growth visibility despite choppy demand signals. HCL Tech delivered a strong quarter, beating estimates on revenue and EBIT margin, and raised its FY26 revenue growth guidance.

Meanwhile, Infosys also reported better than expected results with the management upgrading guidance for FY26 CC revenue growth to 3-3.5% (from 2-3% earlier). The guidance upgrade is a positive step towards the expected AI services inflection in 2026.

Overall, near-term market direction is likely to remain driven by global developments, macro data prints and earnings-related cues. While external uncertainties and FII flows could keep benchmarks range-bound, supportive domestic macros, policy continuity and improving earnings outlook provide a constructive medium-term backdrop for Indian equities.

(The writer is Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited)

DIALOGUES IN DAVOS

India readies power-packed presence at WEF before global elite

DAVOS, PTI

India is set for a power-packed representation at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in this Alpine resort town that will see the global elite discuss "a spirit of dialogue" in a fragmented world for five days beginning Monday.

At least four Union ministers — Ashwini Vaishnaw, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Pralhad Joshi, and K Rammohan Naidu — as well as six chief ministers are expected to be there, along with over 100 top CEOs from the country.

The CMs are Devendra Fadnavis of Maharashtra, N Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh, Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma, Madhya Pradesh's Mohan Yadav, Telangana's A Revanth Reddy, and Jharkhand's Hemant Soren.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar was also expected to be there, but dropped out due to his engagements back home. Besides, Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Rameshbhai Sanghavi and high-level delegations from Uttar Pradesh and Kerala will also visit Davos.

Indian leaders are expected to participate in several panel discussions, including one on 'Can India become the third largest economy in the world' during the summit.

Business leaders from India expected, include Reliance Industries chief Mukesh Ambani, Tata Group's N Chandrasekaran, Bajaj Group's Sanjiv Bajaj, Jubilant Bhartia Group's Hari S Bhartia, TVS Motor's Sudarshan Venu, and Mahindra Group's Anish Shah.

Other Indian corporate leaders expected are Axis Bank's Amitabh Chaudhry, Godrej Industries Group's Nadir Godrej, JSW Group's Sajjan Jindal, Zerodha's Nikhil Kamath, Bharti Group's Sunil Bharti Mittal, Infosys Co-founder Nandan Nilekani, Infosys CEO Salil Parekh, Wipro's Rishad Premji, Essar CEO Prashant Ruia, Paytm's Vijay Shekhar Sharma and ReNew CEO Sumant Sinha.

Former Union minister Smriti Zubin Irani will also be there as founder and chairperson of Alliance for Global Good: Gender Equity and Equality, which was founded a few years ago in Davos itself.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump will be the biggest star among over 3,000 global leaders from government, business, academia, multilateral bodies, civil society, and labour unions.

Trump is coming with his five cabinet members, and the city has got a USA House for the first time in over five decades it has hosted the annual WEF summit. Those expected include Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

People walk at the Davos Congress Centre ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF), in the ski resort of Davos, Switzerland, on Sunday. REUTERS

The WEF said at least 64 heads of government or state would be present, while six out of seven G-7 countries would be represented by their top leadership. China will also have a big delegation attending the event.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will also be present, WEF President and CEO Borge Brende said at an online press conference, asserting that the five-day annual meeting beginning January 18 will have a hard look at Ukraine, Gaza and Latin America, including Venezuela.

Brende said the world is probably facing the most complex geopolitical situation since 1945, and dialogue is not a luxury in times of uncertainty, but an urgent necessity today.

He added that the WEF Annual Meeting will have a historic participation of over 3,000 world leaders from over 130 countries this year, including over 1,700 business leaders, half of whom are CEOs or chairpersons. There would be a record number of 400 top political leaders from across the globe, including a strong Latin American presence. The meeting will also be attended by more than 30 foreign ministers, over 60 finance ministers and central bank governors and more than 30 trade ministers.

Top political leaders taking part include Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, and Swiss President Guy Parmelin. They also include presidents of Argentina, Indonesia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Congo, Ecuador, Finland, Mozambique, Poland, Serbia, Singapore, Israel, and Syria, alongside prime ministers of Spain, Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Palestinian National Authority, and Qatar.

Global leaders attending the summit include United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, World Bank President Ajay S Banga, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, UNESCO Director General Khaled el-Enany, WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

IMTEX Forming 2026 opens at BIEC today

BENGALURU, DHNS: Indian Machine Tool Manufacturers' Association (IMTMA), the apex body of the machine tool industry, is holding its flagship metal forming technology show and exhibition IMTEX Forming 2026 at Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) from January 19 to 25, 2026.

Billed as Asia's largest metal forming and maufacturing technologies show, the event will feature over 600 exhibitors from 20 countries across 4 exhibition halls, covering a space of 46,000 square metres of exhibition space.

IMTEX Forming 2026 will also feature parallel evets, such as the ninth edition of international seminar on forming technology, on January 22 and 23, which will explore new trends, equipment, processes, and technologies in metal forming and related fields. It will also feature i2 Academia Square, a platform for research institutions to present their R&D initiatives to industry stakeholders. Jagruti-IMTMA Youth Programme to raise awareness about the latest advancements in manufacturing among young professionals will also be held during the event. Exhibitors from Germany, Italy, Japan, and Taiwan are showcasing the latest manufacturing technologies and innovations. Visitors from various sectors, including automotive and auto components, aerospace are expected to visit the expo.

Governments wary as Trump floats 'Board of Peace' plan

Diplomats express unease over Gaza focus and permanent seats tied to $1 billion fee

REUTERS

Governments reacted cautiously on Sunday to US President Donald Trump's invitation to join his "Board of Peace" initiative aimed at resolving conflicts globally, a plan that diplomats said could harm the work of the United Nations.

Only Hungary, whose leader is a close Trump ally, gave an unequivocal acceptance in response to the invitations, which have been addressed to some 60 nations and began arriving in European capitals on Saturday, according to diplomats.

Other governments appeared reluctant to make public statements, leaving officials to express concerns anonymously about the impact on the work of the UN.

The board would be chaired for life by Trump and would start by addressing the Gaza conflict and then be expanded to deal with other conflicts, according to a copy of the letter and draft charter seen by Reuters.

US President Donald Trump.

"Durable peace requires pragmatic judgment, common-sense solutions, and the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed. There was a need for a more nimble and effective international peace-building body."

Member states would be limited to three-year terms unless they pay $1 billion each to fund the board's activities and earn permanent membership, the letter states.

"This simply offers permanent membership to partner countries who demonstrate deep commitment to peace, security, and prosperity," the White House said in a post on X. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, visiting South Korea, told reporters her country was "ready to do our part", although it was not clear whether she was specifically referring to Gaza or the broader peace.

Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Sunday he had agreed to Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza in principle although details were still being worked out.

A mandate for a Board of Peace was authorized by the United Nations Security Council in November, but only through 2027 and solely focused on the Gaza conflict. Russia and China, two veto wielding powers, abstained, complaining that the resolution did not give the UN a clear role in the future of Gaza.

The inclusion of a 'charter' in the invitation letter stoked concerns among some European governments that it could undermine the work of the United Nations, which Trump has accused of not supporting his efforts to end conflicts around the world.

"It's a 'Trump United Nations' that ignores the fundamentals of the UN charter," said one diplomat.

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Australia, Canada, the European Commission and key Middle East powers were among those invited, according to officials. "We have, of course, accepted this honourable invitation," Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a close ally of Trump, wrote on X.

The document said "durable peace requires pragmatic judgment, common-sense solutions, and the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed". There was a "need for a more nimble and effective international peace-building body", it added.

A spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Guterres "believes Member States are free to associate in different groups" in response to a question about the draft US charter for a Board of Peace.

Pak PM invited

Pakistan on Sunday said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been invited by President Donald Trump to join the Board of Peace for Gaza, reports PTI.

President Trump has already declared himself as the chair of the body.

WORLD AT GLANCE

Chile declares emergency after wildfires force 20k to flee

▸ **SANTIAGO, AFP:** Chilean President Gabriel Boric declared a state of emergency on Sunday for two southern regions where raging wildfires have forced about 20,000 people to evacuate their homes.

Firefighters were battling 19 blazes across the country, 12 of which were in the regions of Nuble and Biobio, south of the capital Santiago. "In the face of the ongoing serious fires, I have decided to declare a state of natural disaster for the Nuble and Biobio regions," the left-wing president said.

"All resources are available."

The government has not said whether the fires killed anyone or how many homes had been impacted.

Eight skiers killed in avalanches in Austria alps

▸ **VIENNA, AP:** Three avalanches across Austria killed eight skiers, authorities said.

A female skier was fatally buried by an avalanche in the Bad Hofgastein area in western Austria, at an altitude of about 2,200 metres (7,200 feet), around 12:30 pm on Saturday, according to the Pongau mountain rescue service.

Roughly 90 minutes later, an avalanche in nearby Gastein Valley, south of the city of Salzburg, swept away seven people. Four were killed, two seriously injured, and one escaped unharmed.

In the town of Pusterwald in central Austria, three Czech skiers were killed in an avalanche shortly before 4:30 pm, police said. Four of their companions were evacuated to safety.

Wreckage of missing surveillance plane found

▸ **JAKARTA, REUTERS:** Indonesian authorities said on Sunday they had located the wreckage of a fisheries surveillance plane that went missing in South Sulawesi province on the slope of a fog-covered mountain and had recovered the body of one of the 10 people on board.

The ATR 42-500 turboprop owned by aviation group Indonesia Air Transport (IAT) lost contact with air traffic control on Saturday at about 1:30 p.m. local time (0530 GMT) around the Maros region in South Sulawesi.

There were seven crew members and three passengers on board the plane, which was chartered by Indonesia's Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry to conduct air surveillance on fisheries. The passengers were ministry staff members.

Pro- and anti-ICE demonstrators' face off in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS, AP: Protesters for and against the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown clashed in Minneapolis on Saturday as the governor's office announced that National Guard troops had been mobilized and stood ready to assist state law enforcement, though they were not yet deployed to city streets.

There have been protests every day since the Department of Homeland Security ramped up immigration enforcement in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St Paul by bringing in more than 2,000 federal officers.

A large group of protesters turned out in downtown Minneapolis and confronted a much smaller group of people attending an anti-Somali and pro-Immigration and Customs Enforcement rally. They chased the pro-ICE group away and forced at least one member to take off a shirt they deemed objectionable.

In Minneapolis, snowballs and water balloons were also thrown before an armoured police van and heavily equipped city police arrived.

At least 5,000 dead in Iran unrest as judiciary hints at executions

Officials accuse terrorists and armed rioters of killing innocent Iranians

REUTERS

Protesters set afire protraits of US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a pro-Iranian regime demonstration in front of the Iranian consulate in Istanbul, on Sunday. AFP

At least 5,000 people have been killed in protests in Iran, including about 500 security personnel, an Iranian official in the region said on Sunday, citing verified figures and accusing "terrorists and armed rioters" of killing "innocent Iranians".

Nationwide protests erupted on December 28 over economic hardship and swelled over two weeks into widespread demonstrations calling for the end of clerical rule - resulting in the deadliest unrest since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to intervene if protesters continued to be killed on the streets or were executed. In a social media post on Friday, he thanked Tehran's leaders, saying they had called off scheduled executions of 800 people.

A day later, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a public speech branded Trump a "criminal" for the casualties he inflicted on Iran by supporting protesters.

"We will not drag the country into war, but we will not let domestic or international criminals go unpunished," Khamenei said, acknowledging "several thousand deaths" that he blamed on "terrorists and rioters" linked to the U.S. and Israel.

Iran's judiciary indicated that executions may go ahead.

"A series of actions have been identified as Mohareb, which is among the most severe Islamic punishments," Iranian judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangir told a press conference on Sunday.

The Iranian official said the verified death toll was unlikely to "increase sharply".

Hindu bizman beaten to death in Bangladesh, 3 detained

DHAKA, PTI: A Hindu businessman was beaten to death in Bangladesh's Gazipur by three members of a family following a dispute over bananas, local media reported.

It has not been confirmed whether the incident that occurred on Saturday in the Kaliganj area of Gazipur district is related to the recent spate of violence against Hindus in Bangladesh.

The deceased, Liton Chandra Ghosh, 55, was the owner of 'Baishakhi Sweetmeat and Hotel', The Daily Star reported.

According to Zakir Hossain, Officer-in-Charge of Kaliganj Police Station, three members of a family -- Swapan Mia, 55, his wife Majeda Khatun, 45, and their son Masum Mia, 28 -- have been detained for their suspected involvement in the killing.

Police said that Masum owns a banana plantation, and a bunch of bananas went missing from it. He spotted the bananas in Liton's hotel while searching, and an argument started between two parties. "The accused punched, kicked Liton, causing him to die on the spot," police said.

EU urged to hit back at Trump over Greenland

Calls grow to deploy anti-coercion tool over US tariff threat

BRUSSELS, AFP

European leaders on Sunday slammed US President Donald Trump's threat of tariffs over their opposition to his designs on Greenland, warning transatlantic ties were at risk.

Several European countries -- including Denmark, of which Greenland is an autonomous territory -- said they "stand united" against Trump's vow on Saturday to hit them with tariffs of up to 25 percent unless Greenland is ceded to the United States.

"Tariff threats undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral," Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden warned in a joint statement.

Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said in Norway that Trump's ultimatum threatened the world order "as we know it" and the future of the Nato military alliance.

Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte said Sunday he had spoken to Trump about "the security situation in Greenland and the Arctic" and hoped to talk again at this week's Davos summit. He did not elaborate on their conversation.

EU ambassadors were meeting in Brussels Sunday after the European Union called an extraordinary general meeting in response to Trump's statement.

The bloc clinched a deal with Washington in July for most EU exports to face a 15-percent US levy. It was unclear how Trump's threatened tariffs would work against that deal.

"I don't believe that this agreement is possible in the current situation," German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul told ARD television.

Aides to French President Emmanuel Macron said he would ask the EU to activate a never-before-used "anti-coercion instrument" against Washington if Trump makes good on his additional tariffs.

This measure allows for curbing imports of goods and services into the EU, a market of 27 countries with a combined population of 450 million.

POWER COMPANY OF KARNATAKA LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka undertaking) (CIN: U40101KA2007SGC043640)
4th Floor, INDHANA BHAVANA, Race Course Road
Bengaluru - 560009.

No: PCKL/AD(P)/JD(P)/DD(Civil)/2025-26/6073 Date: 17.01.2026

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(e-Procurement mode only)

PCKL invites tenders for Manpower service through KPP portal.

Sl. No	Name of the work	EMD Amount in Rs.
1	Providing manpower services of twelve (12) no's of Data Entry operators, eleven (11) no's of office attenders and one (01) no. of driver to PCKL office, Bengaluru for the period of one year (Call-2). **Tender No : PCKL/2025-26/SE0005/CALL-2**	1,48,000/-

Further details of the tender can be obtained from website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink "e-Procurement" (KPPP portal) from **19.01.2026.** The last date for submission of bid in KPPP portal **on or before 02.02.2026.**

Note: Any changes, addendum, corrigendum will be notified in e-Procurement only, and will not be published in newspaper.

Sd/-
Additional Director (Projects)
PCKL, Bengaluru

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, IPP Center, 72/4, 16th Cross, Vyalikaval, Malleshwarm, Bengaluru 560003

No.: EE/BWCC/TEC-2/TEND/04/2025-26 Date: 17.01.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER
(Only Through KPP Portal) Two Cover System

The Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible contractors firm registered in Bengaluru West City Corporation or equivalent registration with Labour Department or any State Government Organizations for the **Collection of Parking Fees for Various roads in Bengaluru West City Corporation, Traffic Engineering Cell 2** as detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of Work
1	Collection of Parking Fees for 4th Main Road, 8th Cross Road in Malleshwaram. **Minimum Reserve Annual License Fee (Rs.): 94,00,000.00. EMD (in Rs.): 1,88,000/-.**

Time Schedule: (1) Tender document may be downloaded from the KPP Poratl of the Government of Karnataka from **21.01.2026. (2)** Pre-bid meeting will be held on **06.02.2026** at **3:00 p.m.** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, IPP Center, 72/4, 16th Cross, Vyalikaval, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru-560003. **(3)** Tenders must be submitted online through KPP Portal on or before **4:00 p.m.** on **16.02.2026** and the opening of tenders will be as per e-procurement portal guidelines. **(4)** Technical bids will be opened on the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC, Bengaluru on **18.02.2026** at **4:30 p.m.** Further details can be obtained from the above office during working hours or from the website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Traffic Engineering Cell 2, BWCC

Government of Karnataka
Public Works Department
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Mysuru Division, Mysuru.
E-mail: eepwdmys21@gmail.com
Phone No. & Fax No. 0821-2420810
IFT No. 30/2025-26 Dt.14.01.2026

ITEM WISE TENDER NOTIFICATION

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, Executive Engineer, Public Works Department has published item wise Tender notification for the **work of Improvements to roads in SC colony Saragur village at Nanjungud Taluk in Varuna constituency Mysore district.** under this division with KW-4 Conditions & Regulations with Two cover systems, which has been approved under the head of account 4059-80-051-0-60-422 SCP for the year 2025-26. The **Amount Put to Tender is Rs.81.21 Lakhs and EMD amount is Rs.1.62 Lakhs.** Tenders shall be Submitted in KPP-Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) from 14.01.2026 to 22.01.2026, within 17.00 PM.** KPWD Class-III & above Contractor Registered in KPP-Portal are eligible. More details can be obtained from the office of the under Signed during office hours. Any amendments or modifications in tender notification will be published in KPP-Portal Only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Mysuru Division, Mysuru

DIPR/DDMYS/1523/KSMCA/858/2025-26

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. CEE/Tr(OP)ZM/SEE(O)/AEE-3/25-26/8344 Date: 16.01.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Mode Only)

KPTCL invites e-bids against Bid Enquiry No: KPTCL/CEE/TZM/SEE(O)/AEE-3/25-26/851 Dated: 16.01.2026 for Replacement of fully deteriorated tower in 66kV Hanuru-Ajjipura S/s line at location No.25, (SC+3 MS lattice type) by 110kV DD+0 Narrow based tower coming under Shivanasamudram TLM Section in Hanuru Taluk, Chamrajanagara taluk, (including Supply of materials/equipments, erection, civil works, testing & commissioning) on total turnkey basis on **percentage tender basis.**

The tender for the above work is invited through electronic mode. The interested bidders can obtain the application in electronic mode by paying the tender fee. The detailed notification regarding above said enquiry in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website: **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyper link 'E Procurement KPTCL' or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **21.01.2026**. More details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Elec)., Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Prasarana Bhavana, FTS Compound, Mysuru-570007.

Navarro targets India over US power costs for AI services

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, PTI

Peter Navarro

White House trade advisor Peter Navarro has renewed his criticism of India, questioning why Americans are paying for Artificial Intelligence in India.

Navarro's comments on Saturday came amid a strain in India-US ties, which began after US President Donald Trump slapped a 50 per cent tariff on New Delhi, including a 25 per cent additional duty for its purchase of Russian crude oil.

In an interview on Real America's Voice, Navarro said,"...It's like, why are Americans paying for AI in India? Chat GPT (is) operating on US soil, using American electricity, servicing large users of Chat GPT, for example, in India and China and elsewhere around the world. So that's another issue that's got to be dealt with."

His comments came as ties between New Delhi and Washington are reeling under strain on several other issues apart from tariffs, including Trump's claim of ending the India-Pakistan conflict in May last year and Washington's new immigration policy.

Last year, Navarro consistently ranted against India for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil and high tariffs, calling India the "Maharajah of tariffs."

He had also termed India's purchases of Russian oil as "blood money" and said Delhi didn't buy oil from Moscow in large quantities before the Ukraine conflict.

New Delhi has maintained that, like any major economy, it will take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security. In a diatribe targeting the BRICS nations, Navarro had said the "bottom line" is that none of the countries in the grouping can "survive if they don't sell to the United States.

Oldest temple in S Africa battling fraud allegations

JOHANNESBURG, PTI: The over 150-year-old first Hindu temple and a national monument in South Africa's Durban has said it runs a risk of discontinued civic services owing to a pending bill of over half a million rands amid allegations of fraud.

After the temple authorities announced to initiate a forensic audit, the South African Hindu Maha Sabha called on the community to save the 151-year-old Umbilo Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam that was established by indentured labourers who arrived in Durban in 1860 from India.

The financial condition of temple came to light after authorities posted a notice on its Facebook.

ALL SET

Nasa rolls out rocket for Artemis 2; 1st crewed Moon mission in over 50 yrs

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, AFP

Nasa's new moon rocket, Artemis II at the Kennedy Space Center. REUTERS

Nasa on Saturday rolled out its towering SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft as it began preparations for its first crewed mission to the Moon in more than 50 years.

The maneuver, which takes up to 12 hours, will allow the US space agency to begin a string of tests for the Artemis 2 mission, which could blast off as early as February 6.

The immense orange and white Space Launch System rocket and the Orion vessel were slowly wheeled out of the Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and painstakingly moved four miles (6.5 kilometres) to Launch Pad 39B.

If the tests are all satisfactory, three Americans and one Canadian will head to the Moon sometime between February 6 and the end of April -- they will not land, but instead fly around Earth's satellite.

The mission -- which would last about 10 days -- would be a huge step towards Americans once again setting foot on the lunar surface, a goal announced by President Donald Trump in his first term.

"We're making history," Artemis 2 mission management team chair John Honeycutt told a press conference on Friday.

US astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, along with Canada's Jeremy Hansen, were on site Saturday for the rocket's rollout.

"I'm actually pretty pumped to see that," Hansen told reporters. "In just a few weeks, you're going to see four humans fly around the moon, and if we're doing that now, imagine what we can do next."

India receives invitation to Board of Peace for Gaza

Trump reaches out to global leaders for bold new push

NEW DELHI, PTI

US President Donald Trump on Sunday invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be part of the "Board of Peace" that will work towards bringing lasting peace to Gaza and embark on a "bold new approach" to resolve "global conflict".

Trump sent a letter to Modi that was shared on social media by the US Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor.

The president said it was his great honour to invite the prime minister to join him in a "critically historic and magnificent effort to solidify peace" in the Middle East and, at the same time, to embark on a "bold new approach to resolving Global Conflict".

The US president unveiled the board as part of the second phase of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

In October, Israel and militant group Hamas agreed to Trump's peace plan.

Trump has sent similar letters to several global leaders.

Trump's "Board of Peace" is being projected by Washington as a new international body to usher in peace and stability in Gaza and beyond, triggering speculations that it may respond to other global conflicts as well.

Originally, the new body was to be tasked to oversee governance and coordinate funding for Gaza's redevelopment as the strip was devastated during the two years of Israeli military offensive.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump. AP/PTI FILE

In a post on X, Gor said he was honoured to convey Trump's invitation to Modi to participate in the Board of Peace, which will "bring lasting peace to Gaza".

"The Board will support effective governance to achieve stability...," the envoy said.

In his letter to Modi, Trump mentioned his September 29 announcement about a comprehensive plan to end the Gaza conflict, as well as his 20-point roadmap to bring peace to the Middle East.

The US president noted that the United Nations Security Council overwhelmingly adopted Resolution 2803, welcoming and endorsing "this vision".

"...At the heart of the Plan is The Board of Peace, the most impressive and consequential Board ever assembled, which will be established as a new International Organization and Transitional Governing Administration," Trump wrote.

DH DECIPHERS

Why Kashmir mosque profiling is fuelling mistrust

A police-led data collection drive across Kashmir seeking detailed information on mosques, seminaries and religious functionaries has sparked political and religious backlash. A detailed proforma, reportedly circulated through village heads and revenue officials, demands information on clerics, teachers and the school of thought followed by each mosque or seminary. **Zulfikar Majid** *dwells on the growing unease over administrative mapping, perceived as ideological scrutiny.*

What is the official rationale?
Police authorities have not issued a detailed explanation. Officials familiar with such exercises say they are justified as preventive security measures aimed at monitoring radicalisation, preventing misuse of religious platforms and maintaining public order. Critics argue that the absence of a clearly articulated legal framework or safeguards has made the exercise appear opaque, particularly given the depth of information sought.

Why has it drawn objections?
The controversy centres on the perception of selective surveillance and intrusion into religious affairs. Political parties and religious groups argue that the exercise focuses exclusively on Muslim religious institutions. Former chief minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti has described the profiling of mosques and imams as direct interference in religious life, warning that such measures risk alienating Muslims from both their faith and the state.

What has the ruling National Conference (NC) said?
The NC has expressed serious concern, terming the exercise a gross and unwarranted interference in the religious affairs of the Muslim community. Party spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said that it violates fundamental rights, including the right to privacy and protection of personal information guaranteed under the Constitution.

What do religious bodies say?
The Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulema, Kashmir's leading amalgam of Islamic organisations, described the exercise as a complete violation of fundamental rights. It said that internal religious affairs cannot be subjected to arbitrary surveillance, and warned that the nature and depth of information being sought go far beyond routine administrative requirements, raising questions about intent. Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq called on the elected government to halt the exercise. It undermines trust, creates fear among religious functionaries and telegraphs a disturbing message to the entire Muslim community, he said.

Why does it matter?
While security agencies maintain that monitoring religious spaces is necessary in Kashmir's sensitive context, opponents warn that blanket profiling without transparency risks criminalising religious leadership and eroding public trust. The controversy has become part of a broader debate on how security, governance and civil liberties intersect in post-Article 370 Jammu and Kashmir.

How is this seen in the post-Article 370 context?
Since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the Union government has repeatedly highlighted "outreach" initiatives aimed at integrating Kashmir more closely with national institutions. These have included engagement with community elders and religious leaders. However, in Kashmir, many such measures have been viewed with scepticism, particularly when they are accompanied by expanded surveillance and restrictions on political activity. Critics argue that outreach perceived as security-driven rather than consultative tends to deepen mistrust. Critics say that seeking doctrinal details of mosques risks violating both the right to privacy under Article 21 and the freedom of religion guaranteed under Article 25.

Rahul to attend MGNREGA protest in Rae Bareli tomorrow

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

As the Congress steps up its protest against the VB-G RAM G Act, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will attend a "MGNREGA Chaupal" (village community gathering) in his constituency Rae Bareli on Tuesday.

The party started the "MGNREGA Bachao Sangram" (Save MGNREGA Movement) on January 10, demanding restoration of rural job guarantee scheme.

As part of it, party workers have started distributing a joint letter by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul to village heads and MGNREGA workers, among others.

Rahul Gandhi

Congress general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal said on Sunday that Rahul would visit Rae Bareli on Tuesday and attend an MGNREGA chaupal with MGNREGA workers and others.

He said a "comprehensive online review meeting" with the party's state presidents, general secretaries, state incharges, and members of the MGNREGA Coordination Committee was held on Sunday to review the progress of the MGNREGA Bachao Sangram across the country.

"In today's meeting, we collectively resolved to intensify Panchayat-level outreach, directly engaging the general public, MGNREGA Workers and other stakeholders," he said.

This is expected to be followed by ward-level peaceful sit-ins, Vidhan Sabha/Lok Bhavan gheraos, and zonal rallies, all in a planned and sustained manner, he said.

High court pulls up Gujarat Human Rights Commission for settling private dispute

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

The Gujarat High Court has ruled that property disputes between two private parties could not be classified as cases of human rights violations and criticised the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC), where one such dispute was settled, for exercising power and jurisdiction not conferred upon it.

"...[T]he present case is a clear instance where the SHRC exercised powers and assumed jurisdiction which are not conferred upon it under law," Justice Niral R Mehta wrote in his verdict while quashing the case. The court refrained from making adverse comments.

"The commission cannot conduct inquiries or proceedings in a casual manner that defeats the object and intent of the legislature. It is expected to exercise its powers with due caution and circumspection," the judgment read.

It came on a petition moved by three persons against a relative who had filed a civil suit claiming ownership over a piece of land in Zundal village.

The relative initially filed a civil suit and later moved an application before the SHRC on the grounds that her rights had been violated.

The SHRC, according to petitioners, not only entertained the petition but also issued bailable and non-bailable warrants.

Stating that the case was "a clear example of abuse of legal process", the HC held that the commission "committed a serious error in entertaining such a complaint and in initiating proceedings".

Directing the SHRC to follow guidelines listed in the judgment, before taking cognisance or issuing notices, the court said "only those rights which have a direct nexus with life, liberty, equality, and dignity, and which are constitutionally guaranteed", fell within the definition of "human rights".

'Tech hiring set to rise in 2026 with 1.25L new roles'

Tech hiring, from Page 1

In the December quarter, Infosys and Wipro added 5,043 and 6,529 employees, respectively. IT services firms, except Wipro, said they are on track to fulfil their campus hiring targets for FY26. While Infosys said they are on track to hire 20,000 freshers in the current fiscal, TCS has doubled its intake of fresh graduates with higher-order skills.

Executives of IT firms said that they are intensifying focus on AI-ready talent, and they are also making significant investments in building a workforce that is AI and future-ready. Wipro said that lateral hiring will continue and that it will be project and skill-based.

When *DH* asked Wipro Chief Human Resource Officer Saurabh Govil about freshers and AI skills during Q3 post-earnings conference, he said: "From a recruitment standpoint, especially on campuses, we have created 50 centres of excellence across different universities where we work with the university and build a curriculum in a specific area that could be on AI, cybersecurity and data. We work with them and then hire people."

TCS Chief Human Resources Officer Sudeep Kunnumal said that 51.2 million learning hours have been completed year-to-date and 3.8 million competencies have been acquired. "We now have over 2,17,000 employees with higher order skills in AI, which is a three-fold increase over last year. AI is creating new roles, such as rapid-build engineers and leads, which are increasingly vital for the future. We are currently working on aligning our role framework with AI as the centrepiece," he said.

Adecco also said that global capability centres (GCCs) have elevated cybersecurity to a board-level priority. Non-tech sectors have accelerated automation, building cross-functional tech teams at scale. In 2025 alone, the talent gap has soared to 44%, creating a talent war and median packages soaring 18% higher than 2024, it said.

IT companies are now offering premium, high-value packages for freshers with specialised AI skills. HCLTech is betting big on elite freshers with AI skills, and is offering packages that go up to Rs 22 lakh per annum. Infosys is also offering fresher packages up to Rs 21 lakh for specialised tech roles.

CIEL HR MD and CEO Aditya Narayan Mishra said demand for specialised talent continues to gain momentum. He said roles linked to digital transformation, automation and efficiency will see faster hiring cycles.

For TCS, over 50% of its experienced hires are coming with next-gen skill-sets.

Within HCLTech, over 38,000 additional employees have been trained on GenAI and more than 600 on responsible AI. "Today, we have the highest number of open AI badged experts among all open AI partners. Our proprietary talent acquisition platform, Talent Navigator has now been deployed at scale across HCLTech," the company's CEO and MD, C Vijayakumar, said.

Mission Suraksha, a sureshot cure for child marriages in Shivamogga

NRUPATHUNGA S K
SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS

The implementation of Mission Suraksha, the first of its kind in the state, has prevented 54 child marriages since its inception in July last year.

It has also encouraged children below the age of 18 to boldly share instances of sexual assault and violence, including abuse by their own family members, with the police.

The district administration and the zilla panchayat took the initiative to rid the district of child marriages and POCSO cases.

The initial results have been encouraging and, following this, the programme is being implemented in Chikkamagaluru and Kalburgi, sources in the Directorate of Child Protection confirmed.

Sources in the child protection unit said Shivamogga ranked second in the state in child marriages in 2024 and third in POCSO cases. This prompted then Deputy Commissioner Gurudatta Hegde and incumbent Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Hemanth to chalk out a scheme to prevent these social evils.

Accordingly, Mission Suraksha was implemented separately in urban and rural areas.

Vigilance committees were formed at every gram panchayat (GP) level in rural areas and at the ward level in urban areas. In rural areas, the GP president, women GP members, ASHA and anganwadi workers, teachers, primary health centre doctors, schoolgirls and NGO representatives are members of the committees.

Each member is made in charge of four to five girls aged between 0 and 18 years. If girls do not attend classes, members visit their homes to find out the reasons.

In urban areas, the president of the urban local body heads the committee. Women ULB members, the circle police inspector, teachers, students, the child development project officer, two nominated NGO members, and officials from the labour and social welfare departments are part of it.

District Child Protection Officer Manjunath R said earlier the committees met once in three months, but meetings are now being held every month. Details of girls in each GP, including those with single parents, migratory children and those vulnerable to sexual violence, will soon be uploaded on the Mission Suraksha website, which will be accessible only to concerned officials. He said that most victims of child marriage cases are school dropouts and have single parent.

As many as 38 child marriages were reported in the last seven months and were treated as POCSO cases, as the girls had eloped with boys. Manjunath said while child marriages could be prevented, POCSO cases were harder to avoid as underage girls often elope to cities and return after a few months.

In most cases, the girls state that they married the boys and had sexual intercourse. Such cases are higher among school dropouts. Unlike earlier, POCSO cases are now being reported more frequently.

District Child Welfare Committee chairman Tajuddin Khan said teachers are educating students about Mission Suraksha in schools.

Halima, Project Director, Directorate of Child Protection, told *DH* that Shivamogga was the first district in the state to implement Mission Suraksha, followed by Chikkamagaluru and Kalburgi. She said the state has over one lakh child prohibition officers, making it impractical to prevent child marriages without community support.

Hence, the Shivamogga district administration involved elected representatives and staff from all departments and made them responsible for children in their respective regions. Collective efforts are essential to contain child marriages, she said.

Four spotted deer dead in Davangere

DAVANGERE, DHNS: Four spotted deer have reportedly died of suspected Hemorrhagic septicemia at Indira Priyadarshini Mini Zoo at Aangodu near Davangere over the last four days. Efforts are on to protect the remaining 166 spotted deer as the disease is contagious.

Speaking to *DH*, Deputy Conservator of Forests Harshavardhan said of the 170 spotted deer in the zoo, four had died and the samples of blood and organs of the dead deer had been sent to laboratories functioning in Bengaluru and Davangere. The medical report is awaited. Two veterinary doctors - one from Belagavi another from Bengaluru - are coming to Davangere to start the treatment. "All possible steps have been taken to ensure that the rest of the spotted deer would not get infected," Harshavardhan added.

State's no-exercise rate...

Exercise, from Page 1

Speaking to *DH*, Prof Lakshmana said the shift threatens to cripple the state's demographic dividend with a surge in lifestyle diseases.

He attributes this shift to relentless work pressure, a reliance on junk food, and the lifestyle changes inherent in nuclear families.

"In North India, many still engage in physical labour, but in the south, intense desk jobs, sugar-heavy diets, and a lack of time for exercise mean diabetes hits harder," he noted.

"These habits have led to a cluster of conditions, including high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol levels known as metabolic syndrome. Historically, lifestyle diseases were considered the ailments of the elderly, however, the current generation is entering a high-pressure workforce earlier and remaining sedentary longer," he said.

He further noted that prolonged sitting at desk jobs causes skeletal muscle unloading. When muscles aren't moving, they lose their ability to effectively pull glucose from the bloodstream, leading to insulin resistance and Type 2 Diabetes as early as age 20.

Also, entry-level roles and high-growth careers often come with chronic stress.

Additionally, with nuclear families lacking the time-wealth of traditional setups, home-cooked, fiber-rich meals are being replaced by ultra-processed junk foods. These diets are high in sodium and refined sugars, leading to hypertension and Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD).

However, dietary habits remain a concern. Nearly 78% of young adults reported insufficient intake of fruits and vegetables. While Karnataka performs slightly better than other states in terms of sufficient intake, the overall nutritional gap remains wide.

"Everyone knows they need at least 6,000 steps a day, but work and earnings often come first," Prof Lakshmana said.

He warned that as fertility rates decline and dual-income nuclear families become the norm, motor vehicles are replacing walking and junk food is filling time gaps. This "middle-class spending trap" is fuelling obesity, hypertension, and diabetes across all age segments.

As recent Lancet reports suggest nearly 50% of Indian adults are physically inactive, this study urges a shift toward personal health discipline. "Government policies like school 'water bells' exist, but personal commitment to exercise is now crucial for the youth," he stressed.

As non-communicable diseases, such as heart attacks, have increased by over 40% among both youth and adults, he noted that the population must engage in physical activity so the country can leverage its labour force to grow the economy.

Two drown in Kumaradhara river

MANGALURU, DHNS: Two men drowned while bathing in the Kumaradhara river near Kukke Subrahmanya on Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Hariprasad and Sujith, both from Kollamogru village. Both were unmarried.

Hariprasad and Sujith had gone to bathe in the river near Kulkunda in Subrahmanya with others. One of them slipped and drowned. The other tried to rescue him and drowned too. The Subrahmanya Police have registered a case.

Spl court rejects IFS officer's revision petition in sexual harassment & cheating case

BENGALURU, DHNS: A special court for MPs/MLAs has dismissed the revision petition filed by an Indian Forest Service officer (IFS) R Ravishankar challenging the trial court order of taking cognizance in a sexual harassment and cheating case.

The officer Ravishankar, the husband of IAS officer Thulasi Maddineni, is at present Chief Conservator of Forests, Bengaluru.

The case pertains to the private complaint filed by a woman alleging that the officer had made her to believe that he is her husband and had physical intimacy with her. When he started ignoring her, on enquiry, the complainant claimed to have learnt that the officer was already married to Thulasi Maddineni, who is also named by the complainant as an accused.

On June 18, 2022, the trial court took cognizance for the offences punishable under IPC sections 120B, 354, 354(A), 406, 420, 506, 500 and under section 65 of Information Technology Act. The trial court also posted the matter for recording the sworn statement of the complainant and her witnesses, if any.

The officer initially filed the revision petition before the 45th Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge, Bengaluru, and the same was placed before the MPs/MLAs court since one of the accused named by the complainant was Rajarajeshwarinagar MLA Munirathna.

The officer claimed that the complainant was a habitual extortionist and that he had collected information about criminal cases pending against her. According to the officer, the complainant had met him during 2018-19 claiming to be an environmentalist and had sought help for organizing environmental programmes. He further claimed that prior sanction under CrPC section 197 was required before taking cognizance against him.

Special Judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat noted that at the time of taking cognizance, the court need not have to consider the case on merits, and it has to ascertain the existence of prima facie materials only. "..it is only a premature stage wherein the trial court has taken cognizance with respect to offences and not against the offender. Even otherwise, the order sheet of the trial court dated 18.06.2022 would clearly indicate that as on that date, the trial court had passed an order with respect to taking of cognizance and thereafter it was posted for sworn statement of the complainant and her witness, if any. Under these circumstances, the contentions urged by the revision petitioner are devoid of merits at this juncture," the court said.

South Korea's An Se Young poses with her spoils after winning the women's singles title at the India Open on Sunday. PTI

Lin, Young win India Open titles

NEW DELHI, PTI: Taiwan's Lin Chun-yi won the India Open badminton men's singles title on Sunday, after playing conditions that included bird droppings on court and a monkey in the stands drew criticism.

Lin, 26, beat third seed Jonatan Christie of Indonesia 21-10, 21-18 in 38 minutes to clinch the men's crown at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.

In the women's singles final, world number one An Se-young of South Korea beat China's world number two Wang Zhi Yi 21-13, 21-11 to extend her domination on the court.

An has won six consecutive titles since the Denmark Open in October last year, compiling a 30-match winning streak.

However, the sheen was taken off the on-court action after players, including Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt, slammed the "dirty and unhygienic" playing conditions.

"Everyone is stressed and frustrated by the conditions we are being met with at a World Tour Super 750 event," she said in a social media post on Friday.

"At first, you try to laugh it off, but in the end, it is neither funny nor fair to the players or anyone participating in this event."

Atletico strengthen top-four hold

MADRID, AFP: Alexander Sorloth's towering header earned Atletico Madrid a narrow 1-0 win over Alaves on Sunday in La Liga, helping them pull level on points with third-placed Villarreal.

After dropping points in a draw at Real Sociedad in their last league outing, Diego Simeone's side got back on track, moving seven points clear of Espanyol in fifth.

The Rojiblancos, fourth, trail leaders Barcelona by eight points.

Result: Atletico Madrid: 1 (Sorloth 48th) bt Deportivo Alaves: 0.

IN BRIEF

Shivamogga hold Belgaum

▶ Belgaum DFA and Shivamogga DFA played out a 1-1 draw in the single group stage match on Sunday of the of the Senior Olympic State Games at Mahatma Gandhi Stadium in Tumkur.

Result: Belgaum DFA: 1 (Muayiya Ustad 15th) drew with Shivamogga DFA: 1 (Daniel Peter 30th).

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

WPL: GG vs RCB **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 1**, **JioHotstar**.

U-19 World Cup: Pakistan vs Scotland, Sri Lanka vs Ireland, South Africa vs Tanzania **(1:00 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **Jio Hotstar**.

Cooch Behar Trophy: Gujarat vs MP, Day 3 **(9:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **JioHotstar**.

FOOTBALL

EPL: Brighton vs Bournemouth **(1:30 am, Tuesday)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 1**, **JioHotstar**.

TENNIS

Australian Open: Singles 1st Round **(5:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **Sony LIV**.

HOCKEY

HIL: HIL GC vs Ranchi Royals **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **Sony LIV**.

WRESTLING

PWL: Punjab Royals vs Haryana Thunders **(8 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **Sony LIV**.

CRICKET THIRD ODI

After Tests, NZ break ODI series duck

Kohli's 54th ton in vain as Mitchell, Phillips help Kiwis record first rubber win in India

INDORE, PTI

Virat Kohli's magnificent, combative century, forged with trademark resolve under mounting pressure, proved heartbreakingly insufficient as India slumped to their first-ever bilateral ODI series defeat at home against New Zealand, losing the decider by 41 runs at the Holkar Stadium here on Sunday.

Kohli's 124 off 108 balls was a study in controlled aggression and steely temperament. The chase master shouldered the responsibility almost single-handedly, counter-punching a disciplined New Zealand attack with crisp drives, well-judged pulls and calculated risks over the ropes.

As wickets tumbled regularly at the other end, Kohli dug in, refusing to let the chase drift away, but once he fell late in the innings, India's resistance finally collapsed at 296 in 46 overs while chasing a stiff 338. The defeat not only handed New Zealand a 2-1 series win but also marked a historic first -- India had never before lost a home ODI series to the Kiwis.

It was a sobering evening for the hosts, made more poignant by the fact that one of their finest modern-day batters had delivered a near-perfect response to adversity.

Earlier, Daryl Mitchell's second consecutive hundred and Glenn Phillips' blistering century powered New Zealand to a competitive 337 for eight despite early jolts from India's pace attack.

Mitchell (137) and Phillips (106) stitched together a 219-run partnership for the fourth wicket that turned the innings on its head.

Calm and authoritative, Mitchell anchored the stand while Phillips provided the momentum, allowing New Zealand to shift gears after a cautious start.

India were controlling the innings at one stage, having reduced the visitors to 58 for three but Mitchell and Phillips made it a contest.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, brought in for Prasidh Krishna, made an immediate impact by removing Henry Nicholls (0) with a beauty in the opening over.

Coming closer to the off-stump, Arshdeep (3/63) shaped the ball away to perfection as Nicholls, caught in two minds, withdrew his bat late and saw the delivery take the inside edge and crash into the leg-stump.

Arshdeep and fellow seamer Harshit Rana (3/84) hit the deck hard and extracted just enough movement to keep the New Zealand batters under check early on. The visitors managed only 47 runs in the first 10 overs, losing both openers cheaply. Harshit dismissed Devon Conway (5) for the third straight time, inducing an edge with a back-of-a-length delivery that was safely taken in the slips.

Will Young (30) attempted to break the shackles with a six over deep backward point off Harshit but the bowler had the last laugh.

Harshit broke the 53-run stand between Young and Mitchell when the former cut firmly to the right of Ravindra Jadeja at backward point, where the Indian all-rounder took a comfortable catch.

Mitchell once again set the tone for New Zealand's recovery by taking on Kuldeep Yadav early, launching the left-arm wrist-spinner for a towering six. In reply, India's chase began shakily. Rohit Sharma fell early for 11, caught by Kristian Clarke off Zak Foulkes, and Shubman Gill was dismissed for 23 by Kyle Jamieson, leaving India two down inside seven overs. Kohli immediately set about rebuilding the innings with purpose.

Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul failed to provide support, departing cheaply as India slipped to 71 for four.

Kohli, however, remained unflustered, rotating strike efficiently and punishing loose deliveries.

His partnership with Nitish Kumar Reddy (53 off 57 balls) revived India's hopes.

Daryl Mitchell (left) and Glenn Phillips scored counter-attacking centuries to help New Zealand beat India in the third ODI at the Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore on Sunday. PTI

Kiwis end ODI series jinx in India

New Zealand's 41-run win in the 3rd ODI in Indore helped them win a bilateral ODI series in India for the first time. Prior to this series, they had lost all the previous 7 bilateral ODI series against India in India.

New Zealand's recent BILATERAL SERIES IN INDIA

Format	Year	Result
Tests	2024	Won 3-0
(FIRST TEST SERIES WIN IN INDIA)		
ODIs	2026	Won 2-1
(FIRST ODI SERIES WIN IN INDIA)		

Daryl Mitchell's 137 in Indore was his
- Highest score in ODIs
- 9th ODI century
- 4th hundred against India
- 3rd century in his last 4 ODI innings

The 219-run stand between Mitchell and Glenn Phillips was NZ's highest partnership against India in ODIs in India.

Virat Kohli's 124 in Indore was his
- 54th century in ODIs
- 47th ODI hundred batting at #3
- 29th century in ODI run-chases
- 27th hundred in ODIs in India
- 7th ODI hundred against New Zealand
- 5th hundred in a failed ODI run-chase

COMPILED BY ARUN GOPALAKRISHNAN

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND

Conway c Rohit b Rana	5
Nicholls b Arshdeep	0
Young c Jadeja b Rana	30
Mitchell c Kuldeep b Siraj	137
Phillips c Rahul b Arshdeep	106
Bracewell (not out)	28
Hay lbw Kuldeep	2
Foulkes c Kuldeep b Arshdeep	10
Clarke b Rana	11
Jamieson (not out)	0
Extras: (B-5, NB-2, W-1)	8
TOTAL: (for 8 wkts, 50 overs)	**337**

Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-5, 3-58, 4-277, 5-283, 6-286, 7-304, 8-327

Bowling: Arshdeep 10-1-63-3, Harshit 10-0-84-3, Siraj 10-0-43-1, Nitish 8-0-53-0, Kuldeep 6-0-48-1, Jadeja 6-0-41-0.

INDIA

Rohit c Clarke b Foulkes	11
Gill b Jamieson	23
Kohli c Mitchell b Clarke	124
Shreyas c Foulkes b Clarke	3
Rahul c Phillips b Lennox	1
Nitish c Young b Clarke	53
Jadeja c Young b Lennox	12
Harshit c Nicholls b Foulkes	52
Siraj c Hay b Foulkes	0
Kuldeep (run out)	5
Arshdeep (not out)	4
Extras: (LB-1, NB-1, W-1)	8
TOTAL (all out, 46 overs)	**296**

Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-45, 3-68, 4-71, 5-159, 6-178, 7-277, 8-277, 9-292.

Bowling: Jamieson 9-0-58-1, Foulkes 9-0-77-3, Clarke 9-0-54-3, Lennox 10-0-42-2, Mitchell 1-0-10-0, Phillips 8-0-54-0.

Series: NZ win 3-match series 2-1.
PoM & PoS: Daryl Mitchell.

Confident Challengers look to maintain winning run

With four wins on the bounce, Smriti's girls start favourites against Giants

VADODARA, PTI

On a roll, the Smriti Mandhala-led Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look to extend their winning run when they face Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League here on Monday.

Unbeaten RCB are the team to beat in the tournament, having registered their fourth consecutive win on Saturday.

GG, on the other hand, started on a bright note, winning their first two games before losing the next two to be placed third in the WPL table.

The icing on the cake for RCB is skipper Mandhana's return to form as she struck a match-defining 96 against Delhi Capitals in their emphatic eight-wicket win on Saturday.

Opener Grace Harris too has got good starts in the four matches but failed to convert them into big scores, while Georgia Voll too rose to the occasion with an unbeaten 54.

RCB boast of a strong batting line-up in the form of hard-hitting wicket-keeper batter Richa Ghosh, Nadine de Klerk, Gautami Naik and Radha Yadav.

While RCB's bowling unit too is a potent force with the likes of Lauren Bell and Sayali Satghare providing the initial impetus, able support is provided from spinners like Shreyanka Patil, Prema Rawat and Yadav. RCB would also take confidence from their 32-run win over GG in their first face-off this season at Navi Mumbai two days ago.

GG, led by Australian Ashleigh Gardner, consists of a formidable batting line-up which includes Australian great Beth Mooney, Sophie Devine, Kanika Ahuja, Gardner, Georgia Wareham and Bharti Fulmali but in the last two matches they failed to dish out an all-round performance to get over the line.

Skipper Smriti Mandhana's fine form augurs well for Royal Challengers Bengaluru. PTI

England's Pak origin players get visas for WC

NEW DELHI, PTI: The International Cricket Council has stepped in to facilitate visa formalities for all 42 players and officials of Pakistan origin bound for the T20 World Cup in India. In the England squad, cricketers of Pakistan lineage include spinners Adil Rashid, Rehan Ahmed and pacer Saqiib Mahmood.

USA will be represented by Ali Khan and Shayan Jahangir while the Netherlands have Zulfiqar Saqib to name a few.

It has been learnt that visas have already been cleared for England players Rashid, Rehan and Saqib. Members of the Netherlands squad have also received their visas.

Canada staff member Shah Saleem Zafar has been granted clearance as well. Visa arrangements are currently underway for players and officials of Pakistan nationality or origin who are part of teams from United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Italy, Bangladesh and Canada.

For these teams, visa appointments have already been scheduled for early next week.

Shreyanka returns to India T20I squad

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka off-spinner Shreyanka Patil returned to the Indian T20I squad for a three-match series in Australia next month.

The 23-year-old, who has appeared in three ODIs and 16 T20Is since making her India debut in December 2023, had been out of action for more than a year as she sustained back-to-back to injuries.

Her last international outing was on October 13, 2024 against Australia in Sharjah.

Her return to the national fold was on the cards after her good showing in the ongoing Women's Premier League where she has taken eight wickets, including a five-wicket haul, in four matches for Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Batter Bharti Fulmali also returned to the T20I squad while wicketkeeper G Kamalini and left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma earned maiden ODI call-ups.

Kashvee Gautam was also added to the 15-member ODI squad, while pacer Arundhati Reddy and left-arm spinner Radha Yadav were dropped.

Shreyanka Patil

Harleen Deol, a part of the ODI set-up, has been dropped from the 16-member T20I squad.

The T20Is will be played on February 15 (SCG), February 19 (Manuka Oval) and February 21 (Adelaide Oval), while the ODIs will be held on February 24 (ABF, Brisbane), February 27 (Bellerive Oval, Hobart) and March 1 (Bellerive Oval, Hobart).

T20I squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Renuka Thakur, Sree Charani, Vaishnavi Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Sneh Rana, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (WK), G Kamalini (WK), Arundhati Reddy, Amanjot Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues, Bharti Fulmali, Shreyanka Patil.

ODI squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Renuka Thakur, Sree Charani, Vaishnavi Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Sneh Rana, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (WK), G Kamalini (WK), Kashvee Gautam, Amanjot Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol.

Erigaisi beats Praggu in opener

WIJK AAN ZEE (THE NETHERLANDS), PTI: Top seed Arjun Erigaisi (**in pic**) scored a convincing victory over compatriot R Praggnanandhaa, while World Champion D Gukesh played out a hard-fought draw against World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan in the first round of the Tata Steel Masters here.

After a delayed start caused by environmental activists' protest, the world's oldest running super tournament finally took off and the first round had enough excitement to keep the chess buffs glued to their screens for nearly five hours.

The first victory of the event was scored by Hans Moke Niemann of the United States, who was pleasantly surprised to notice an optical blunder by Slovenian Vladimir Fedoseev early in the middle game.

Niemann pounced on the opportunity like a hawk and Fedoseev resigned as early as on move 16 when material loss was inevitable.

German Vincent Keymer was the other winner of the day as he scored at the expense of Dutch star Anish Giri.

Results: Round 1 (Indians unless specified): Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb) drew with D Gukesh; Arjun Erigaisi beat R Praggnanandhaa; Aravindh Chithambaram drew with Matthias Bluebaum (Ger); Hans Moke Niemann (USA) beat Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo); Vincent Keymer (Ger) beat Anish Giri (NED); Jorden van Foreest (NED) drew with Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze); Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb).

Newcastle held by lowly Wolves

NOTTINGHAM (UK), AFP

Newcastle's push towards the Premier League's top four was derailed by a damaging 0-0 draw against bottom of the table Wolves on Sunday.

Eddie Howe's side were unable to prise open the Wolves defence as two points slipped away at rain-lashed Molineux.

Wins over Burnley, Crystal Palace and Leeds had bolstered their bid to qualify for next season's Champions League.

But the Magpies are stuck in eighth place after failing to beat Wolves.

Following their disappointing 2-0 defeat against Manchester City in the League Cup semi-final first leg on Tuesday, it was another frustrating result for Newcastle. With crucial matches against top four rivals Aston Villa and Liverpool looming before the end of the month, Howe's men must get back on track quicky.

Wolves are now unbeaten in four league games but still sit 14 points from safety.

Nick Woltemade had gone six games without a goal and the Newcastle striker wasted a chance to end that drought when he headed wide from a good position. Woltemade, who had scored only twice in his previous 12 appearances, was guilty of another wasteful miss moments later, heading over from Kieran Trippier's cross. Mateus Mane has emerged as bright spot for Wolves in their gloomy campaign and the teenage forward tested Newcastle goalkeeper Nick Pope with a hooked effort from Hwang Hee-chan's flick.

Despite playing out a 0-0 draw to Nottingham Forest, Arsenal opened a seven-point lead at the top of the table. AFP

Arsenal draw

Arsenal opened up a seven-point Premier League lead despite failing to break down a resilient Nottingham Forest in a 0-0 draw at the City Ground on Saturday.

Results: Wolves: 0 drew with Newcastle: 0; Nottingham Forest: 0 drew with Arsenal: 0.

Ryan's ton hands President's XI innings honours

BENGALURU, DHNS: Ryan Tomar cracked a fine hundred while Prabhav Pydah scored a half-century to help President's XI take three points in their drawn encounter against Shivamogga Zone in their KSCA Under-14 Inter-Zonal tournament here.

President's XI, batting first and riding on knocks from Ryan (170), Prabhav (83) and Neeraj (39) posted 356 for eight in 90 overs. Rathan P was the pick of the bowlers for Shivamogga, picking up 3/53.

In reply, Shivamogga Zone were bundled out for just 204 in 81 overs as M Neeraj starred with the ball, returning figures of 4/23. He was ably supported by Aniket Chaturvedi (3/36).

Brief scores: President's XI: 356/8 in 90 overs (Prabhav Pydah 83, Ryan Tomar 170, M Neeraj 39; Mayur N 2-73, Rathan P 3-53, Utsav Gowda DS 2-45) & 22 for no loss in 13.4 overs drew with Shivamogga Zone: 204 all out in 81 overs (Utsav Gowda DS 28, Mayur N 43; Aniket Chaturvedi 3-36, M Neeraj 4-23). **President's XI : 3 points; Shivamogga Zone: 1 point.**

Bangalore City XI: 346/7 in 90 overs (Ahaan Dash 46, Hannan Zaki Ahmad 146 n.o., Lalithesh R 30, Akhilesh Pradhan 28; Pratham Shree Ram G 2-72) drew with Tumkur Zone: 107 all out in 53.3 overs (Pranav Murthy 32; Ahaan Dash 3-17, Jeet D 2-14, Rahul Jena 2-3) & 147/6 in 41 overs (Pranav Murthy 49, Mohammed Yaseen 41; Aadithya P 2-18). **Bangalore City XI: 3; Tumkur Zone : 1.**

Vice President's XI: 284 all out in 87.1 overs (Vikrant Ronav Budala 33, Aadit Kaul 39, Vyom Naidu 42, Gaurav Jeevan 53, Samrat Aditya P 55, Shrutik Ghosh 33; Aahil Jabali 2-45, Sanat B Patil 2-51, Atharv Karadi 3-38, Vivaan Bhusad 2-35) & 188/4 in 34 overs (Athreya Bhat 74, Vikrant Ronav Budala 52, Vyom Naidu 45; Daivik Mugabast 3-23) drew with Dharwad Zone: 140 all out in 60.5 overs (Akshay Baligar 28, Daivik Mugabast 59 n.o.; Chiranjeevi BG 3-16, Samrat Aditya P 3-8) **Vice President's XI: 3; Dharwad Zone: 1.**

Bangalore Zone: 348/8 in 90 overs (Jashwanth M 35, Aarnav Karsha 28, Kishan Yadav A 28, Saurjyesh Das 57, Mohammed Umair 25, Ayush 26, Akhieera Allan W 29 n.o., Bhavin Joe Francis 68 n.o.; Cheran Tej Raju C 3-44, Vishist PJ 3-51) drew with Secretary's XI : 333/7 in 90 overs (Sachit S Galatagi 38, Cheran Tej Raju C 110, K Hrithik Polin 89, Vishist PJ 41 n.o.; SK Sharath 2-71, Aarya Raj 2-58). **Bangalore Zone : 3; Secretary's XI: 1.**

Raichur Zone: 292/9 in 90 overs (Pavandeep R Bharadakane 156, Prajwal D 29, Rathod Sairam 45; Ibrahim Khan 2-62, Swarith Girigowda 2-50, Krishna 3-28) & 54/3 in 17 overs (Krishna 2-20) drew with Combined City XI: 286 all out in 81 overs (Saachin Suresh Araganji 108, Hrithvik Shetty 35, Sriganesh M 78 n.o.; Athmik Pujari 2-68, Ruvam Bohra 3-45). **Raichur Zone: 3; Combined City XI: 1.**

Mysore Zone: 224 all out in 77.5 overs (Sachin Raj S 111, Gowrinandan P Kotian 3-50, Pradyoth Rao Jadhav 4-42) & 207/5 in 56 overs (Nikhil G Chethan 54, Jayanth Raghu Gowda 35, Sachin Raj S 30, Likith CK 41 n.o.,Swaroop H 28, Gowrinandan P Kotian 2-34) drew with Mangalore Zone: 90 all out in 43.5 overs (Naman Raj Naik 33, Benaka R Gowda 2-29, Pratham Ram 2-6, Guruprasad G 3-13, Sachin Raj S 2-5). **Mysore Zone: 3; Mangalore Zone: 1.**

Lancers maintain unbeaten run

BHUBANESHWAR, PTI: Vedanta Kalinga Lancers maintained their unbeaten run with a 4-1 penalty shootout win against Accord Tamil Nadu Dragons in the men's Hockey India League here on Sunday.

The two teams were tied 1-1 at the end of regulation time at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium here.

Blake Govers opened the scoring to put the Dragons in front before Alexander Hendrickx equalised for the Lancers.

Krishan Pathak was exceptional in goal for table-toppers in regulation time, while Jed Snowden came off the bench to dominate in the shootout, helping his side record their sixth successive win.

Earlier, the Dragons managed to break the deadlock in the second quarter, earning a penalty stroke that was converted by Govers (19th).

The Lancers thought they bagged an immediate response with Dilpreet Singh finding the back of the net. However, his goal was ruled out after a referral and the Dragons led at the half time.

Krishan Pathak's saves were complemented by Alexander Hendrickx in the 44th minute, who converted his dragflick from their fourth penalty corner.

Towards the end, neither side could make it count though which forced a shootout to decide the winner. After his shootout heroics earlier in the tournament, Snowden proved to be the difference once again for the Lancers.

As the Dragons missed their first two attempts to hand their opponents the advantage, Arthur van Doren put the game to bed.

ISL clubs' concern eases as AIFF softens stance on veto

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

A few days after the Indian Super League clubs showed their concern over veto power for All India Football Federation (AIFF) in its recommended governing council and management committee, both parties have broadly come on terms with the federation softening its stance.

The focus now shifts on other crucial matter for the much-delayed season -- starting from February 14 -- as the clubs and federation are expected to virtually meet by the midweek to draw the fixtures.

The AIFF also issues the Request for Proposal (RFP) document for broadcast rights relating to the truncated ISL season.

The last date to seek clarifications by the bidders is January 27, while the deadline for submission is on February 1.

The bids will be opened on February 2 as per the RFP.

As far as the governing council's veto issue is concerned, the breakthrough came after clubs expressed their concern for the initial draft of the ISL governance charter, where AIFF top brass had veto on a wide range of issues, including commercial decisions, budget deviations and broadcast partnerships.

That didn't sit well with most of the 14 participating clubs, who felt the federation's veto could tilt the balance too far away from those actually running and funding the league.

Following the feedback, the AIFF agreed to make changes and will present a revised draft to the clubs by Tuesday.

The new draft will continue to give power to the federation on regulatory football matters such as compliance with the Laws of the Game, disciplinary issues, integrity, anti-doping and adherence to regulations.

However, it will exercise no veto when it comes to commercial, operational decisions and scheduling will largely be driven by the clubs and future commercial rights holder.

TENNIS AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Alcaraz, Sabalenka have it easy

No fairytale finish for Venus, Zverev drops a set before win

MELBOURNE, AFP

Top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka launched their Australian Open title bids with straight-sets wins but there was no fairytale for 45-year-old Venus Williams on Sunday.

On a hot Melbourne day in which a ball girl fainted, last year's men's beaten finalist Alexander Zverev dropped a set before easing into the second round.

World number one Alcaraz joined him, the Spaniard beating 81st-ranked home player Adam Walton 6-3, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena.

Alcaraz, who is desperate to win the Australian Open to complete the career Grand Slam of all four majors, plays Germany's Yannick Hanfmann next.

Alcaraz has won the US Open, Wimbledon and French Open, but Melbourne is the one Grand Slam missing from his impressive resume.

The furthest he has gone at the opening major of the year is the quarter-finals and he has made it clear that dethroning rival Jannik Sinner as champion is his main aim for 2026.

If he does so, the 22-year-old would surpass compatriot Rafael Nadal to become the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam.

Earlier, in steamy conditions approaching highs of 30C, Zverev threatened to implode in losing the first set to Canada's Gabriel Diallo.

But the 28-year-old German recovered from the shock to win 6-7 (1/7), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 and next meets Australian Alexei Popyrin or Alexandre Muller of France.

Asked how he reset from his first-set wobble, the third seed said: "I was thinking it can't get worse than that.

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz defeated Australia's Adam Walton 6-3, 7-6 (2), 6-2 in the opening round of the Australian Open at the Melbourne Park on Sunday. REUTERS

British qualifier Arthur Fery scored the first big upset by taking down 20th seed Flavio Cobolli of Italy, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 6-1.

Novak Djokovic, who is chasing a record 25th major title, begins his title assault on Monday, as does three-time runner-up Daniil Medvedev.

Organisers said that more than 100,000 people came through the gates, although there were complaints about long queues in the heat.

Underlining how fierce it was on court, a ball girl fainted during the match between Zeynep Sonmez and Ekaterina Alexandrova, with both players rushing to help her.

Sabalenka began her bid for a third Australian Open title in four years with a patchy start before coming good in the second set.

The world number one, stunned by Madison Keys in the 2025 final, ultimately had too much power, guile and quality for French wildcard Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah.

But the Belarusian took time to find her touch, making a series of unforced errors before taming the spirited 20-year-old 6-4, 6-1 on Rod Laver Arena.

"It is always tricky playing someone young, someone you don't know, and a lefty (left-hander)," said the top seed and title favourite.

Sabalenka said she had felt added pressure with tennis legends Roger Federer and Rod Laver court-side.

Sabalenka faces Chinese qualifier Bai Zhuoxuan next.

Title rivals Iga Swiatek and Coco Gauff play on Monday.

Also safely through was seventh-seeded Italian Jasmine Paolini as she outclassed Belarusian qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich 6-1, 6-2.

Australian Open results

First Round: (prefix denotes seeding): Men's singles: 1-Carlos Alcaraz (Esp) bt Adam Walton (Aus) 6-3, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2; Yannick Hanfmann (Ger) bt Zachary Svajda (USA) 7-5, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3); Michael Zheng (USA) bt Sebastian Korda (USA) 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (0/7), 6-3; 32-Corentin Moutet (Fra) bt Tristan Schoolkate (Aus) 6-4, 7-6 (7/1), 6-3; 10-Alexander Bublik (Kaz) bt Jenson Brooksby (USA) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; Márton Fucsovics (Hun) bt Camilo Ugo (Arg) 7-6 (7/5), 6-1, 6-2; Tomas Etcheverry (Arg) bt Miomir Kecmanovic (SRB) 6-2, 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; Arthur Fery (Bri) bt Flavio Cobolli (Ita x20) 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 6-1; 29-Frances Tiafoe (USA) bt Jason Kubler (AUS) 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-2; Francisco Comesana (Arg) bt Patrick Kypson (USA) 6-2, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; 3-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt Gabriel Diallo (Can) 6-7 (1/7), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2; Emilio Nava (USA) bt Kyrian Jacquet (Fra) 6-2, 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 4-6, 7-6 (10/6); 26-Cameron Norrie (Gbr) bt Benjamin Bonzi (FRA) 6-0, 6-7 (2/7), 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; 18-Francisco Cerundolo (Arg) bt Zhang Zhizhen (Chn) 6-3, 7-6 (7/0), 6-3; Damir Dzumhur (B&H) bt Liam Draxl (Can) 7-5, 6-0, 6-4; Jaime Faria (Por) bt Alexander Blockx (Bel) 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.
Women's singles: 1-Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) bt Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah (Fra) 6-4, 6-1; Bai Zhuoxuan (Chn) bt Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (12/10); Anastasia Potapova (Aut) bt Suzan Lamens (Ned) 3-6, 7-5, 6-2; 28-Emma Raducanu (Gbr) bt Mananchaya Sawangkaew (Tha) 6-4, 6-1; Caty McNally (USA) bt Himeno Sakatsume (Jpn) 6-3, 6-1; Polina Kudermetova (Uzb) bt Guiomar Maristany (Esp) 6-2, 6-3; Zeynep Sonmez (Tur) bt 11-Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) 7-5, 4-6, 6-4; Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) bt Beatriz Haddad Maia (Bra) 3-6, 7-5, 6-3; Elsa Jacquemot (Fra) bt 20-Marta Kostyuk (Ukr) 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (10/7); 7-Jasmine Paolini (Ita) bt Aliaksandra Sasnovich (Blr) 6-1, 6-2; Olga Danilovic (Srb) bt Venus Williams (USA) 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-4; Hailey Baptiste (USA) bt Taylor Townsend (USA) 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3; 12-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) bt Cristina Bucsa (Esp) 6-4, 6-1; Talia Gibson (Aus) bt Anna Blinkova (RUS) 6-1, 6-3; Gabriela Ruse (Rom) bt 26-Dayana Yastremska (Ukr) 6-4, 7-5; Maria Sakkari (Gre) bt Leolia Jeanjean (Fra) 6-4, 6-2.

Ball girl faints due to heat

Play was halted during an Australian Open first-round match Sunday when a ball girl fainted as temperatures soared, with players Zeynep Sonmez and Ekaterina Alexandrova rushing to help her, reports AFP from Melbourne.

The incident happened as Russian 11th seed Alexandrova was serving during the second set with the girl falling onto her back while standing at the base of the umpire's chair.

Emerging Turkish star Sonmez sprinted over to help while Alexandrova fetched ice bags before she received medical attention.

Advani retains snooker crown

Veteran edges out fighting Aditya 6-3 in title clash

BENGALURU, DHNS

Dominant Pankaj Advani overcame a late fightback from Aditya Mehta en route to his 11th national snooker title in the 92nd edition of the premier championship in Bahadurgarh, Haryana on Sunday.

The defending champion played the big points well to emerge a worthy 6-3 winner in the final. After a slow start, Advani grew in confidence as the match wore on to take a vice-like grip over the proceedings. He came up with a sizzling break of 133 in the fifth frame for a 4-1 lead in the best-of-11 frame title clash.

However, Aditya, whose form deserted him after a gritty 51 clearance in the opening frame, dug into his reserves and fought back in fine fashion. He clinched the sixth and seventh frames with useful breaks to make a fist of it.

The Mumbaikar could have taken the eighth frame as well, but missed a regulation pink pot to the top left-hand pocket when leading 57-50 to let Advani off the hook.

The champion from Bengaluru sank the pink and black to make it 5-3.

Results: Final: Pankaj Advani (PSPB) bt Aditya Mehta (PSPB) 6-3 (30-67 (51), 70 (70) -38, 77-6, 75-38, 141 (133) -0, 0-121 (51, 70), 6-67, 63-57, 63-1). **Third-place playoff:** Ketan Chawla (MP) bt Laxman Rawat (PSPB) 4-3 (30-76, 8-66, 28-65, 70-53, 67-25, 47-39, 51-17).

Pankaj Advani beat Aditya Mehta to claim the 92nd edition of the National snooker championship on Sunday.

Ethiopians Abate, Yeshi dominate

MUMBAI, PTI: Ethiopians' domination in the Mumbai Marathon continued as Tadu Abate Deme and Yeshi Kalayu Chekole **(in pic)** won the men's and women's elite race titles respectively here on Sunday. Abate clocked 2-hour 9-minute 55 seconds to emerge champion among the men's elite runners, while his Ethiopian compatriot Yeshi crossed the finish line in a time of 2:25:13 -- the fifth fastest time of the event.

It was the seventh time the Ethiopians took both men's and women's titles together in Mumbai out of the 21 editions.

Leonard Kiprotich Langat (02:10:10) of Kenya and Merhawi Kesete Weldemaryam (02:10:22) of Eritrea were second and third.

Vidarbha's VHT coronation

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

In Indian domestic cricket, Vidarbha is the quintessential "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". They aren't blessed with natural superstars, often relying on strong teamwork to get the job done. It was the case again in the Vijay Hazare Trophy final against Saurashtra on Sunday as they produced a collective performance to win the elusive national one-day title.

The reigning Ranji Trophy champions, who lost to Karnataka in the final exactly a year ago in Vadodara, seemed fired up from the word go here at BCCI's Centre of Excellence. First, they rode on a brilliantly constructed 128 off 118 balls from opener Atharva Taide and a fine 54 off 61 balls from Yash Rathod to post a competitive 317/8 in 50 overs.

With both Vidarbha and Saurashtra cruising home in chases in the semifinals, the former knew the total was nothing but just above par. But Vidarbha were game for it, the pace trio of Yash Thakur (4/50), Nachiket Bhute (3/46) and Darshan Nalkande (2/52) dishing out a strong show to dismiss a fighting Saurashtra for 279 in 48.5 overs for a 38-run triumph. Vidarbha openers Taide and Aman Mokhade laid the foundation for a 300-plus with a fine 80-run stand where they nicely alternated between caution and aggression.

Vidarbha players celebrate with the Vijay Hazare Trophy after beating Saurashtra in the final by 38 runs at BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO / PRASHANTH HG

Saurashtra's pacers Jaydev Unadkat and Chetan Sakariya (2/45) were right on the money at the start, keeping the lines and lengths tight without offering any freebies.

If Taide and Mokhade wished to score boundaries, then they had to take risks.

The openers did well but gambled on them nicely, playing the big shots only when the ball was in and around the hitting zone.

There were a few inside and outside edges, but luckily for them, nothing cost their wicket. Saurashtra were getting annoyed, but they didn't let it affect them, the bowlers continuing to dish out disciplined stuff.

A wicket was coming, and Mokhade departed in the 18th over after chopping one onto the stumps.

However, Taide and Yash Rathod (54) ensured Saurashtra didn't capitalise on it completely with a fighting 133-run stand. Taide was the aggressor in the partnership, playing some gorgeous lofted shots to keep the run-rate going steadily at a little over 6 runs an over.

After reaching his century for the first time this VHT, Taide started to take a lot more risks, which ultimately saw him depart in the 36th over. With impetus being on quick runs, Vidarbha's middle and lower batters went for big shots and ended up losing wickets at regular intervals, which somewhat derailed their momentum.

Vidarbha pacers Thakur and Bhute came out with a purpose, stifling Saurashtra's openers Harvik Desai and Vishvaraj Jadeja, the hero of the semifinal.

Both of them departed with 30 on the board, and at the halfway stage, Saurashtra were 124/4. Saurashtra, despite being given several lifelines thereafter through butter-fingered Vidarbha fielders, couldn't recover enough.

Brief scores: Vidarbha: 317/8 in 50 overs (Atharva Taide 128, Aman Mokhade 33, Yash Rathod 54, R Samarth 25; Chetan Sakariya 2-45, Chirag Jani 2-65, Ankur Panwar 4-65) bt Saurashtra: (Prerak Mankad 88, Sammar Gajjar 25, Chirag Jani 64; Yash Thakur 4-50, Nachiket Bhute 3-46, Darshan Nalkande 2-52) by 38 runs.
PoM: Atharva Taide **PoS:** Aman Mokhade

Miss American Pie bags feature

MUMBAI RESULTS

M K Jadhav-trained Miss American Pie, ridden by David Allan, won the Mulraj Coculdas Trophy, the feature event of the Mumbai races on Sunday.

1. Maharaja Sir Pratapsingh Gaekwad Trophy - 1200M: Challenge Accepted (Rajendran) Ramswarup 1; Eastern Monarch (Akshay Kumar) 2; Bee Magical (Neeraj Rawal) 3; Enforcer (Yash Narredu) 4; Wb: 4-1/4, 1-1/2, 1-1/4L. T: 1-10.11. TB: A Jodha. Fav: Challenge Accepted.
2. Mulraj Goculdas Trophy -1200M: Miss American Pie (Prashant Nagar) David Allan 1; Market King (G Vivek) 2; Son Of A Gun (A Prakash) 3; Irish Gold (Akshay KUmar) 4; Wb: Shd, 3L, Shd. T: 1-09.12. TB: M K Jadhav. Fav: Miss American Pie.
3. Jayramdas Patel Gold Trophy - 2000M: Endurance (Homi Mehta) Yash Narredu 1; Exuma (David Allan) 2; Break Point (Akshay Kumar) 3; Black Thunder (Neeraj Rawal) 4; Wb: 3, 3/4, 5L. 2-04.15. TB: Imtiaz Sait. Fav: Endurance.
4. P R Mehta Trophy - 1000M: Blue Jet (Niraj Tyagi) Yash Narredu 1; Gunfire (Neeraj Rawal) 2; Dreams Come True (A Prakash) 3; Latios (G Vivek) 4; Wb: 2-1/2L, Lnk, Shd. T: 0-58.77. TB: Deepesh Narredu. Fav: Sequential.
5. Y M Chaudhary Memorial Trophy - 1400M: Invictor (Gaurav Sethi) David Allan 1; Angelisa (A Prakash) 2; Lorenza (Yash Narredu) 3; Soleva (G Vivel) 4; Wb: 5-1/2, 3/4, 1-1/2L. T: 1-24.11. TB: Altamash Ahmed. Fav: Invictor.
6. S M Shah Salver - 1400M: American Eagle (Ashok Ranpise) Ramswarup 1; Lucio (G Vivek) 2; Bohemian Rhapsody (Nazil) 3; Agatha (A Omkar) 4; Wb: 2-1/2, Snk, 3/4L. T: 1-24.05. TB: Shahzaan Shah. Fav: Bezalel.
7. Ferrari Plate - 2000M: Chicago Chimes (Mrs Anusuya Gupta) David Allan 1; Royal Champ (Antony Raj) 2; Golden Heart (Yash Narredu) 3; Leo The Lion (Mustakim Alam) 4; Wb: 3-1/2, 3-1/2, 1-1/2L. T: 2-05.53. TB: Karthik Ganapathy. Fav: Royal Champ.
Bengaluru dividends:
I race: Rs 22w; 12, 12, 15p; Fc: Rs 73; Q: Rs 42; Shp: Rs 29; Thp: Rs 38; Tri: Rs 173 & 97; Ex: Rs 254 & 83.
II race: Rs 15w; 11, 25, 52p; Fc: Rs 135; Q: Rs 88; Shp: Rs 81; Thp: Rs 101; Tri: Rs 1,166 & 799; Ex: Rs 4,034 & 832.
III race: Rs 21w; 14, 44p; Fc: Rs 419; Q: Rs 218; Shp: Rs 92; Thp: Rs 31; Tri: Rs 447 & 112; Ex: Rs 1,043 & 1,073.
IV race: Rs 69w; 17, 18, 27p; Fc: Rs 313; Q: Rs 215; Shp: Rs 62; Thp: Rs 66; Tri: Rs 3,655 & 1,230; Ex: Rs 55,764 & 7,966.
V race: Rs 15w; 10, 22, 17p; Fc: Rs 82; Q: Rs 58; Shp: Rs 56; Thp: Rs 40; Tri: Rs 246 & 90; Ex: Rs 410 & 136.
VI race: Rs 43w; 17, 14, 70p; Fc: Rs 302; Q: Rs 116; Shp: Rs 43; Thp: Rs 123; Tri: Rs 6,148 & 2,049; Ex: Rs 28,672 & 12,288.
VII race: Rs 28w; 14, 12, 11p; Fc: Rs 55; Q: Rs 25; Shp: Rs 29; Thp: Rs 33; Tri: Rs 101 & 66; Ex: Rs 352 & 239.
Jackpot: 2,804 (262).
Runner-up: Rs 416 (757).
Treble: Rs 601 (186).

Double delight for shooter Hrudya; Abishek wins

BENGALURU, DHNS

Shooter Hrudya Shri Kondur bagged double gold medals in the women's 10m air rifle events of the Karnataka State Games in Tumkur on Sunday.

She won in the individual event, edging second-placed Nidhi Mittal by mere 0.4 points in a close battle and then teamed up with her Nidhi and Ritisha Pohit for the team gold of the same shooting event.

Results: Men: 10m air rifle: Abishek Sekhar 627.8 pts, 1; Onkar Vikas Waghamare 622.9, 2; Jishnu Satish 622.5, 3. **10m air pistol:** Sathish M 574, 1; Kumar Vaibhav 568, 2; Kiran R 566, 3. **25m pistol:** Thushhar T R 546, 1; Faisal Shariff 532, 2; Rakshit Shastry 518, 3. **50m rifle P:** Mohammed Rayan Baig 613.4, 1; Manjunath G S 608.6, 2; Goutham Mecheri Vogga 604, 3.

Hrudya Shri Kondur (left) and Ritisha Pohit

Team: 10m air rifle: Sahas K R, Jishnu Satish, Himadvith KM 1854, 1; Arnav Agrawal, Onkar Vikas Waghamare, Surya RD 1851, 2; TR Srijay, Rajveer Batra, Macneil D'Souza 1847, 3. **10m air pistol:** N Varun, Vivek Pankaj, Sathish M 1683, 1; Sharanendra K Y, Rakshit Shastry, Lovelesh Kumar Gupta 1680, 2; Rahul Koudal, Thushhar T R, Kumar Vaibhav 1553, 3. **25m pistol:** Thushhar T R, Faisal Shariff, Vivek Pankaj 1565, 1; Rakshit Shastry, Bhaktavatsalam Dilip, Likhith Mruthyunjaya Latha 1461, 2; James Joseph Pullokaran, Divya Nigam, Prasad Dhananjay Gaikwad 1365, 3. **50m rifle P:** Mohammed Rayan Baig, Chirantthan Reddy V, A S Arshad Shariff 1779 pts, 1; Goutham Mecheri Vogga, Nanjappa P M, Sanjay N 1773, 2.
Women: 10m air rifle: Hrudya Shri Kondur 630.8 pts, 1; Nidhi Mittal 630.4, 2; Ritisha Pohit 629.5, 3. **10m air pistol:** Avanthika Madhu 572 pts, 1; Aishwarya M 568, 2; Priya Muralidhar 567, 3.
Team: 10m air rifle: Hrudya Shri Kondur, Nidhi Mittal, Ritisha Pohit 1881, 1; Ustat Lahoria, Chaitra Jaiprakash, Shubhashree Swain 1874, 2; Kiran Nandana, Aadyaa Ramesh, Kusuma P M 1870, 3. **10m air pistol:** Priya Muralidhar, Avanthika Madhu, Aishwarya M 1694, 1; Aishwarya Ravichandar Balehosur, Shwetha Shivanna, Gamberya V Gowda 1658, 2; Dvija Mohith Gowda, Dhanvita Basavaraj, Bhavani Vedula Gayatri 1650, 3.
Dragon boat 200m: Chitradurga, 1; Bengaluru Urban, 2; Bengaluru Rural, 3.
Netball (All finals): Men: Hassan bt Tumkur 36-35.
Women: Dakshin Kannada bt Bengaluru Urban 28-17.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
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BRIEF NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER (NIET)

On behalf of the President of India, item rate e- tender are invited for the following works:

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Proposed Modifications to Director's office at 1st floor of Admin Block, LEOS, Peenya, Bengaluru -58 (Civil & PH works). NIET No: LEOS/CMG/CW-01/2025-26; Dtd: 15.01.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 71.47 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 1,42,940/-; Period of Completion in months :** 06 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 20.01.2026; **Closing Date :** 05.02.2026

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Proposed CISF Watch Tower at LEOS Campus, Peenya, Bengaluru -58 (Civil & PH works); NIET No: LEOS/CMG/CW-02/2025-26; Dtd: 15.01.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 37.45 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 74,900/-; Period of Completion in months :** 06 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 20.01.2026; **Closing Date :** 05.02.2026

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Smoke detection and Fire alarm system for Admin Block, Optics Block and Lab Block at LEOS-ISRO, Peenya, Bangalore -560058.; NIET No: LEOS/CMG/EMW-04/2025-26; Dtd: 09.01.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 50.58 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 1,01,160/-; Period of Completion in months :** 08 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 19.01.2026; **Closing Date :** 05.02.2026

Name of the work : NIT NO & Date: Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of solar street light systems in Aryabhata Campus & Providing Off grid type solar Photovoltaic system(SPV) for existing street lights including civil works for battery room at LEOS Campus Peenya, Bangalore-58.; NIET No: LEOS/CMG/EMW-05/2025-26; Dtd: 09.01.2026; **Estimated cost put to tender in Rs. 55.54 Lakhs; EMD Rs : 1,11,080/-; Period of Completion in months :** 08 months; Tender document can be downloaded from : **Opening Date :** 22.01.2026; **Closing Date :** 10.02.2026

Interested tenderers may please refer detailed Notice Inviting e-Tender (NIET) for eligibility criteria and other details in website: www.isro.gov.in and download the tender documents from www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO

-Sd-
GROUP DIRECTOR
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP (C&MG)
URSC, BANGALORE.

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER
(only through KPP Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1.	South-2	BWSSB/EES2/PB/1964/ 2025-26 Dt:12/01/2026	₹ 25,59,008/- / ₹ 51,200/-	30.01.2026 upto 4:00 PM	31.01.2026 after 3:00 PM
2.		BWSSB/EES2/PB/1966/ 2025-26 Dt:12/01/2026	₹ 26,92,984/- / ₹ 53,900/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-2)

Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

3.	South-East-1	BWSSB/EE(SE)-1/TO/PB/3851/ 2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026	₹ 7,35,295/- / ₹ 18,400/-	02.02.2026 upto 4:00 PM	03.02.2026 after 4:30 PM

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-East-1)

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

4.	Buildings	BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3280/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026	₹ 29,71,528/- / ₹ 59,431/-	02.02.2026 upto 4:00 PM	03.02.2026 after 4:00 PM
5.		BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3278/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026 (Reserved for SC Category)	₹ 45,24,456/- / ₹ 45,245/-		
6.		BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3276/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026 (Reserved for Category-1)	₹ 39,97,005/- / ₹ 39,980/-		
7.		BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3272/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026 (Reserved for Category-II(A)	₹ 22,13,666/- / ₹ 25,000/-		
8.		BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3274/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026	₹ 74,40,629/- / ₹ 1,48,813/-		
9.		BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3264/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026	₹ 86,03,973/- / ₹ 1,72,080/-		
10.		BWSSB/EE(Building)/PB/ 3262/2025-26 Dt:16/01/2026	₹ 88,74,047/- / ₹ 1,77,481/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Building)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours. DIPR/CP/5085/CCL/2025-26

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